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**Gender, Class, and Visibility in
An American Tragedy, the *Symbolic Drawings*
of Hubert Davis, and *A Place in the Sun***

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In short, if *An American Tragedy* itself was lost from life, its essential tragedy, if not text, might well be reconstructed from these various intense reactions—their inherent understanding and epitomization of all that is so true and so sad about that very complicated mesh of misery that was Clyde and his desires and his weaknesses and failures.

Theodore Dreiser, "Hubert Davis and
An American Tragedy" (2)

The Symbolic Drawings of Hubert Davis for Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy, comprising twenty black-and-white images, was published by Horace Liveright in 1930, in a large-format limited edition of 525, with a laudatory Foreword by Dreiser.¹ Davis's stylized and arresting images have the distinction of being the first adaptation of a Dreiser novel into a visual medium, though despite eliciting high praise from the novelist himself they have been comparatively neglected by critics. In contrast, George Stevens's multiple-Oscar-winning 1951 film *A Place in the Sun* has attracted serious discussion both in connection with the novel from which it is adapted (via Patrick Kearney's play) and independently for its cinematic style. Translating *An American Tragedy* into visual form, these adaptations reshape the nexus of gender and class relationships narrated by Dreiser in ways that illuminate the 1925 novel and, in the case of Stevens's film, changes in American identity following World War II. In particular, the visual artifacts produced by Davis and by Stevens and his team resonate with

two contentious aspects of Dreiser's masterpiece: indeterminacy and spectacle.

Nowhere is Dreiser more controversial than in regard to gender, and rarely is such controversy more intense than over the depictions of Roberta Alden and Clyde Griffiths in *An American Tragedy*. Significant recent work² has mapped positive and negative poles of Dreiser's depictions of working-class women, and *An American Tragedy* emerges from these discussions as being particularly fraught with tensions between complicity with patriarchal gender forms and the exposure and even critique of these forms. Such tensions are held suspended by the style of the novel, characterized by a high level of narrative detail, multiple explanations, and frequent free indirect discourse. We can understand the cumulative effect of these styles in terms of two contrasting modes of writing—the discursive and the diegetic—whose interaction is the central balancing act of *An American Tragedy*. Dreiser's piling up of detail, explanation, and discourse shows the complex ways in which individual subjectivities are produced by social, psychological, biological, and other influences. For several critics, as will be seen, this kind of writing gives rise to a productive indeterminacy that corrodes dominant notions of justice, guilt, truth, or subjectivity. Yet this proliferation of meaning would, if unchecked, leave readers with an all-encompassing epistemological doubt sufficient to unhinge *An American Tragedy* from social realities of empowerment and victimization. This vertiginous effect is constrained by the diegetic dimension of the novel, exemplified best in the depiction of gazes, looking relations, and spectacles, in which power, and shifts in power, are always evident.

In their efforts to transform Dreiser's verbal opacity into visual forms, Davis's drawings and Stevens's film sit awkwardly on this balance. Visual images are potentially more immediate and more effective than words, as Dreiser wrote of Davis ("Hubert Davis" 4), but they also add yet more layers of meaning. Davis's twenty "symbolic drawings" are closest to the novel not only in time but also in their suggestion of multiple perspectives and interpretations, providing direct visual analogues for its complex interweaving of classed and gendered power. A deliberate updating of Dreiser's work for post-World War II America, *A Place in the Sun* simplifies the novel into a cross-class love story, yet it still offers powerful images of class and gender difference that capture some of the tensions and ambiguities of Dreiser's book. Before examining each of these works in detail, it is first necessary to elaborate the relation between indeterminacy and spectacle in *An American Tragedy* itself.

An American Tragedy and Indeterminacy

Dreiser had earned a reputation for ambivalence and ambiguity even before the appearance of the 800-page triple-decker *An American Tragedy* in 1925. As Harris Merton Lyon put it in 1917, for Dreiser “there are always two, and possibly three or a dozen sides to everything” (8). A case in point is the crucial moment in the narrative of *Sister Carrie*, Hurstwood’s theft of the ten thousand dollars from his employer’s safe. By the time Hurstwood stands before the unlocked safe, Dreiser has over the course of many chapters carefully documented the forces that will cause the manager finally to spring into action—the coldness and crass materialism of his family life, the contrasting appeal of Carrie’s youth and beauty, his wife’s chance discovery of the dalliance, the increasing pressure from her lawyers that drives him to drink more than normal at the very moment that he needs all his faculties. By this point, Dreiser’s multiple, often conflicting characterizations have further increased the ambiguity of his act. Hurstwood is variously a self-made man who has “risen by perseverance and industry” (33) to his status as “a very acceptable individual of our great American upper class” (34), a “spider” who pounces on Carrie, the hapless “fly . . . caught in the net” (91) of the city, a “romanticist . . . capable of strong feeling” (95) and deeply responsive to Carrie’s “spiritual side” (107), a Hamlet subject to “too much thinking” (141) to act decisively, a mechanism whose “clock of thought ticks out its wish and denial” (192) when confronted by the tempting stack of bills and who can never deal with the “true ethics of the situation” (193). At the crucial moment, the narrator’s objective, analytical perspective begins to give way to free indirect discourse, the technique by which a narrator assumes the perspective and often the language of a character while still using the third person:

He took them [the boxes of money] out and straightened the matter, but now the terror had gone. *Why be afraid?*

While the money was in his hand the lock clicked. *It had sprung! Did he do it?* He grabbed at the knob and pulled vigorously. It had closed. *Heavens! he was in for it now, sure enough.* (193; emphasis added).

The italicized passages are strongly colored by Hurstwood’s mixture of self-justification (“Why be afraid?”), moral confusion (“Did he do it?”), and fear (“Heavens!”). The effect is to draw readers in and to experience the event from Hurstwood’s own perspective, from which we are much less likely to judge him as merely a thieving philanderer and more likely to em-

pathize with one caught up in a “tragedy of affection” (138).

The use of free indirect discourse also retrospectively guides our reading of Dreiser’s multiple characterizations and explanations. The blurring of interior consciousness with narrative “reality” makes it impossible to synthesize descriptions into a multifaceted sense of Hurstwood’s character and makes it futile to form hierarchical explanations into a diagnostic framework. Rather, we must suspend judgment and allow the contradictions to coexist. Julian Markels has eloquently glossed the effect in terms of Dreiser’s “plotting of inarticulate experience,” a massing and careful arrangement of significant plot details that produce an image of life as “an amoral process” (510). But at what point does this discourse of empathy become an apologetics for a man caught out in the predatory sexual exchange of Chicago nightlife?

An American Tragedy is even more clearly plotted around a central inexplicable event, which is, of course, the drowning of the pregnant Roberta Alden in Big Bittern Lake. Much more fully than he had with Hurstwood, Dreiser carefully manages his plot to show the increasing power of forces, the repelling force of the pregnant and ever-more-demanding Roberta, the embodiment of the working-class world Clyde seeks to escape, and the attractive force of the ever-more-alluring Sondra Finchley, the embodiment of the leisure-class life of wealth, pleasure, and beauty he seeks to enter.

Efforts to understand the event are frustrated by the many interpretations offered by the narrator and other characters. Most obviously, Roberta’s death results from a disintegration of Clyde’s personality as his unconscious gains ascendancy, that is, as the “efrit” (463) voicing “the mystic or evil and terrifying desires or advice of some darker or primordial and unregenerate nature of his own” (464) leads Clyde to plot a murder. Yet the drowning itself is further complicated by a “sudden palsy of the will” (491)—“a static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do” (492)—that is broken only when Clyde strikes out at Roberta in an impulsive effort to escape “her touch—her pleading—consoling sympathy” (492) when she responds to the look of anguish on his face.

The first failure to understand the event is Clyde’s own, rendered largely by indirect discourse, as indicated by the italics added below:

And then Clyde, with the sound of Roberta’s cries still in his ears . . . swimming heavily, gloomily and darkly to shore. And the thought that, *after all, he had not really killed her. No, no. Thank God for that. He had not. And yet* (stepping up on the near-by bank and shaking the water from his clothes) *had he? Or, had he not? For had he not refused to go to her rescue . . . ? And yet—and yet—* (494).

In this passage, external reality is isolated in parentheses as readers directly experience Clyde's moral floundering. No later interpretation can encompass the event's ambiguity more successfully—not the argument of prosecutor Mason that Clyde “willfully, and with malice and cruelty and deception, murdered” (640) the poor innocent country girl he had first debauched, not his defense attorney's theory that he was “a victim of a mental and moral fear complex” (669), not the Reverend Duncan McMillan's conclusion that Clyde must die because, as he tells the condemned man, “In your heart was murder then” (794).

This characteristic ambiguity has prompted contrasting strands of Dreiser criticism. At one extreme, many subsequent interpretations have aimed to read through Dreiser's style to deep coherence in terms of, for example, processes of commodification and reification or underlying logics or symptoms of American capitalism.³ At the other extreme, and of immediate concern here, other critics have found that the indeterminacy of Dreiser's novels constitutes their particular interest. While highly influential Dreiserians such as Eliseo Vivas and Donald Pizer have expounded and explained the workings of indeterminacy in Dreiser, it has been most powerfully celebrated by Julian Markels, in the influential 1961 essay cited above, and, more recently, by Ronald Schleifer. For Schleifer, the key trope of *An American Tragedy* is “[t]he gesture of explanation without intelligibility” (163). Building on Markels's argument, he elaborates a view of Dreiser's characteristic indeterminacy as a limit case that demonstrates the flaws and blind spots inherent in ideas about knowledge transplanted to the U.S.A. from the European Enlightenment.

Schleifer therefore celebrates the Dreiser of *An American Tragedy* for “the inarticulateness of his explanations . . . the lack of proportion between events and interpretation” (164). This negative quality is not in itself Dreiser's key achievement. Rather, “[t]he very fact that Dreiser fails at intelligence is . . . a *condition* of his strength” (164). Schleifer refers to this strength as “bombast,” a specifically American form of writing which emerges unconsciously from the failure of the explanatory project copied from Russian and French novels. Hence, for Schleifer, Dreiser “offers, in the interplay of event and interpretation that never can encompass the event itself, a form of bombast that does not ‘clarify’ but does present and enact the nation's view of itself” (164).

It is impossible to do justice here to Schleifer's complex, detailed, and wide-ranging argument, and we can readily acknowledge the importance of paying such detailed attention to the connections between literary practice and philosophical paradigms. However, there are good reasons to be wary

of elevating indeterminacy to the status of a unifying principle, in that “difference” must be understood socially as well as philosophically. It is not clear that the avowedly postmodern practice of analogical thinking does enough to de-center white masculinity from its “default” position in Enlightenment discourse.⁴

In his discussion of *An American Tragedy* Schleifer does not make explicit a reading of Roberta or Sondra, whose status as “embodiments” of certain states has already been remarked upon. However, it is striking that his apotheosis of Dreiser repeatedly parallels the author with his fictional creation Clyde:

Clyde is less *intelligent* than a character in James or Wharton. . . . And Dreiser shares this limitation with his character. . . .

The tragedy of Clyde’s life—like the power of Dreiser’s novel—is not its explanation but the palpable fact that explanation cannot sufficiently explain. . . .

Dreiser’s description of Clyde’s mind is itself representative of his attempt to comprehend inarticulateness. (166)

The very singularity of the title *An American Tragedy* suggests that an important issue is the centrality of Clyde’s perspective, which requires the relative marginalization of Roberta Alden’s perspective and that of others. There is little doubt that Dreiser had an intense personal identification with Clyde. He was reported to have wept at the 1935 Broadway stage production, saying, “The poor boy! The poor bastard! What a shame!” (qtd. in Lydenberg 5). But an emphasis on philosophical indeterminacy alone can lead us to focus too narrowly on Clyde as a universal subject, to abstract notions of difference, and to ignore the ways in which *An American Tragedy* embeds his story in social relationships and intertwines it with those of Roberta, Sondra, and the rest.

Paradoxically, indeterminacy is a means for Dreiser to attack very specific social problems, most obviously the denial of abortion to working-class women like Roberta, a denial that gives an odd ring to Julian Markels’s notion that in “Dreiser’s sense we are all victims equally” (512). Roberta’s pregnancy is “one of those whirling tempests of fact and reality in which the ordinary charts and compasses of moral measurement were for the time being of small use” (388). What is at stake is more social than textual, something akin to the interpenetration of sex (as bodies) and sexuality (as the discursive production of sex) that impels the work of Michel Foucault.⁵ In this instance, Dreiserian indeterminacy results from overlapping and potentially conflicting discourses of identity—primarily discourses of

gender, class, and sexuality—deployed as means to exert power over others. According to one discourse, that emphasized by the prosecution at Clyde’s trial, Roberta is a woman of the agrarian class who possesses a natural sexual virtue; according to another discourse, that of the industrialist Griffiths family, she is a working class woman whose dangerous sexuality must be contained by rigorous taboos against intimacy with male supervisors. The dissonance between these discourses challenges the notion of an innate, coherent subjectivity, but more than this it calls attention to the ways that notions of subjectivity are themselves embedded in overlapping classed and gendered struggles for power.

For Dreiser, subjectivity is largely constructed by mechanisms that regulate various inner drives, especially sexuality. The importance of such mechanisms can be suggested by a further brief comparison of *An American Tragedy* with *Sister Carrie*. Dreiser’s first novel articulates the importance of regulating sexual desire in ways that differ according to gender. The sexuality of Carrie Meeber is almost entirely sublimated into desires for self-transformation, the mechanism for which is the Veblenian comparison and emulation whose importance for Dreiser has been conclusively demonstrated by Clare Eby. Other people excite commodified desire in Carrie because their relevance to her is defined solely in terms of being models for emulation. Carrie’s invidious comparison of Drouet’s shoes with Hurstwood’s (signaling a potential route to improved status by marriage) and her fantasies of emulating middle-class women and men in department stores and on Broadway bring about her transformation. Carrie’s lovers are eventually dismissed from the narrative since “[n]ot them, but that which they represented, she longed for” (368). Although this economy of commodified desire prevents her from achieving what Markels calls “self-presence” (516), it effectively regulates and makes manageable her decentered subjectivity. For Drouet and Hurstwood, sexual desire is directly expressed in sexual conquests, but their fortunes, especially Hurstwood’s, depend on the ability to keep sexuality separate from their professional and public lives. There must be “no scandals,” Hurstwood’s employers make clear, so the manager remains “circumspect in all he did” (66) until his desire for Carrie undermines his good judgment.

This gendered distinction seems to have broken down in *An American Tragedy* since not only Clyde Griffiths but also, among others, Hortense Briggs and Roberta Alden (as Paul Orlov has suggested) are conflicted by social and sexual desire with an intensity unknown in *Sister Carrie*. Rather than sublimating her sexuality as Carrie does, Hortense exudes the “savor of sensuality and varietism” (86) that enslaves Clyde, whom she manipulates

in order to gain the material trappings—fur coats and the like—of the stylish women she wishes to emulate. While lacking Hortense's mendacity, Roberta sees in Clyde both a means of upward mobility and a source of "wild and convulsive pleasure" (299). Without reliable internal mechanisms to control her sexuality, or access to reliable external mechanisms to manage her fertility, Roberta ends up at the bottom of Big Bittern. As for Clyde, the effort to sublimate comes too late. His love for Sondra is "without lust, just the desire to constrain and fondle a perfect object" (365), but the trap created by his unregulated desire for Roberta has already begun to close. To the extent that *An American Tragedy* portrays the failure of mechanisms of regulation and the saturation of social desire with sexual desire, it does suggest Markels's notion of the equality of victimhood.

Spectacle and Visibility in *An American Tragedy*

If Dreiser's interweaving explanations serve alternately to show and to obfuscate, his depictions of spectacle and looking relations are continually reliable indices of power. From the opening chapter of *Sister Carrie*, in which the narrator cautions his heroine "never to look a man in the eyes so steadily" (5), the gaze is gendered as male. By the time she makes it on Broadway, Carrie is not simply consumer and performer; she is also "the ideal soft pornographer's model, having internalized exactly what is required of her" (Beer 171), which is to be "a delicious little morsel" displaying herself before the "portly gentlemen in the front rows" (326). It is therefore fitting that Hurstwood's final emasculation involves his being subjected to the scornful gaze of men who deny his possession of a meaningful selfhood. Well-dressed New Yorkers in the theater district "turned to look after him, so uncouth was his shambling figure. Several officers followed him with their eyes, to see that he did not beg of anybody" (362). And when he tries to get in the back door of the theater to see Carrie, he is shoved away by a menial who is "almost tickled at the spectacle" (363) of his degenerate state.

In *An American Tragedy*, in parallel with its more complex depiction of desire and regulation, the relations between gender and the gaze become much more complicated. The book opens with Clyde singing psalms on a street corner and feeling "ashamed, dragged out of normal life, to be made a show and jest of" (10), but the power of the gaze to determine his self-image is not limited by gender. To be sure, there are plenty of men with threateningly phallic gazes—the rounders who "drilled" Clyde's sister Esta "like an invisible ray" (21) in response to her awakening desires, Gilbert

Griffiths, who keeps Clyde in his place during their first meeting by “drilling him” (180) with his eyes, the witness in the court room “who seemed to pierce him now with small, deep-set, animal like eyes” (637). Yet a woman’s look can be just as powerful by creating the illusion of self-worth rather than threatening it. Hortense controls Clyde by looking at him “winsomely and coaxingly straight in the eye, as though he were the one person among all these present whom she really did like” (129), and Clyde begins to develop delusions about winning Sondra the night they dance together and exchange “seeking glances into each other’s eyes” (328). Clyde’s own eyes are a curious blend of desire and fear. Though she can not define it, Sondra senses beneath Clyde’s surface confidence “a deeper current of self-distrust which showed as a decidedly eager and yet slightly mournful light in his eye” (328). And as he tries to persuade Roberta that she must go to an abortionist alone, should they find one, “[h]is eyes were distressed and determined, and, as Roberta could gather from his manner, a certain hardness, or at least defiance, the result of fright, showed in every gesture” (387).

There seems to be a similar ambiguous mixture of aggression and fear in the gaze of Roberta Alden. Before meeting her for the trip to Big Bittern, Clyde knows that “her steady, accusing, horrified, innocent blue eyes would be about as difficult to face as anything in all the world” (437). But no such look actually appears in Roberta’s eyes during the two days of the death trip. From this point on, we are increasingly caught up in Clyde’s inner life, a realm where events occur on “an insubstantial row-boat upon a purely ideational lake” (485). At this point also the grounding function of spectacle is pushed to its limits. The parallels between Clyde’s “distressed and determined” eyes and Roberta’s “steady, accusing, horrified, innocent” eyes suggest their similarities across gender difference—principally in terms of class position and class aspiration. Yet neither gaze is presented straightforwardly through a realist diegesis. Rather, both are conditioned by the presence of the other in consciousness. In the latter instance, Roberta’s gaze is wholly imagined by Clyde. But if this centralizes Clyde’s consciousness, Roberta remains a troubling, disruptive element within it. Narrative point of view is more complex and shifting in the discussion over the abortionist, where the apparently direct diegetical statement “His eyes were distressed and determined” immediately gives way to intra-diegetical perception: “and, as Roberta could gather from his manner. . . .”

The challenge for Hubert Davis was to capture in symbolic drawings these complexities of visibility, looking, and centralization/marginalization.

The Gendered Gaze in Hubert Davis's *Symbolic Drawings*

Born in 1902, Hubert Davis worked in a variety of media, including oils and watercolors, as well as designing for the theater, drawing caricatures for the *New York World*, and illustrating the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe. His relationship with Dreiser extended to painting a portrait of the writer, while in 1933 Dreiser repaid the compliment by publishing a tribute to accompany one of Davis's Poe sketches in the *Greenwich Villager* magazine. The twenty *Symbolic Drawings* form a narrative sequence, and at each opening, the image on the right-hand page is presented opposite a short passage from the novel itself. In his Foreword, entitled "Hubert Davis and *An American Tragedy*," Dreiser goes out of his way to present the work as so successful a visualization that, were the book itself to be lost, "its essential tragedy" could be reconstructed (2). The drawings are, emphatically, not illustrations in the sense of mere supplements to the text. Rather, Dreiser directs us to view them as a visual analogue of the novel. The translation into visibility does alter the form in which gender difference is evoked; nevertheless, it captures the basic tensions of the novel.

Davis's expressionistic and symbolic style is an analogue to Dreiser's narrative point of view and especially its blurring of distinctions between internal and external perspectives, which at times makes it impossible to distinguish between actual and mental events. One example already quoted is the description of Clyde's moral quandary immediately after the murder. Another is the recurring call of the "wier-wier" bird, which no one but Clyde hears and which in some ambiguous way symbolizes his desperate need for freedom. Someone (in free indirect discourse it could be Clyde or the narrator) wonders if its sound is "a warning," "a protest," or "condemnation" (490), but no matter what meaning we ascribe to it, the bird functions as an expressionistic symbol that has more to do with Clyde's subjective state of mind than with external events.

Likewise, Davis's images offer no single omniscient viewing position that might correspond to a programmatic explanation for Clyde's biographical trajectory. Neither do they offer some magical remedy for the novel's gender asymmetry. Most of the drawings directly portray scenes in the narrative—the Griffiths family street mission, Clyde and Roberta outside the house of Dr. Glenn, Roberta pregnant and unhappy in her room in Biltz (the closest we come to being shown her subjectivity)—but at times Davis's expressive style deliberately blurs distinctions between consciousness and representation, playing back and forth between interior life (desires, fears) and depiction of events. This style destabilizes point-of-view, blurring distinc-

tions between Clyde's thoughts and feelings and what is happening in the narrative. For the most part, only Clyde's interior life is suggested, his perceptions normalized. The second and fourth images in the sequence, for example (figs. 1 and 2), combine a direct depiction of narrative diegesis with figments of Clyde's memories, imagination, and desires.

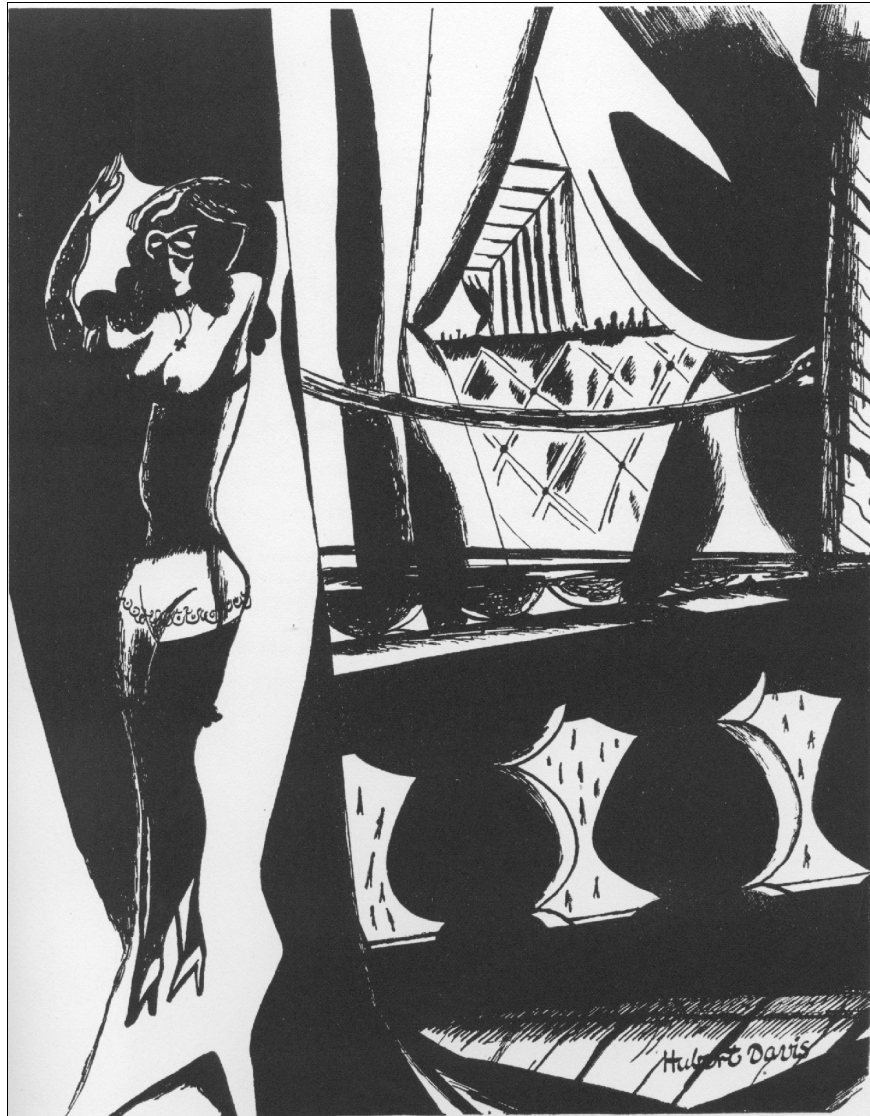


FIG. 1.

The first of these accompanies text indicating Clyde's feelings about becoming a bell-boy in a fancy Kansas City hotel:

He was to be a bell-boy in the great Hotel Green-Davidson. He was to wear a uniform and a handsome one. . . . And in addition he was to live and move always in the glorious atmosphere of this hotel—not to have to go home ever before twelve, if he did not wish—to have good clothes—interesting company, maybe—a good time, gee! (40)

Davis chooses to represent Clyde's notion of "a good time," not by depicting a single moment in the novel, but by condensing many experiences in a single symbolic image—a masked, virtually naked, and highly sexualized female figure juxtaposed against a disorienting view of the hotel's interior. This symbolic image telescopes material from a little later in the novel to signal the eroticism of hotel life alongside the social and economic possibilities that strike Clyde at the time. The woman's mask, surroundings, and posture, as if dancing, suggest that she is a middle-class client of the hotel and hence a figure of social, economic, and erotic desire, an example perhaps of that "certain type of woman or girl" the bellhops will whisper about, "who inhibited perhaps by the social milieu in which she found herself, but having means, could invade such a region as this, and by wiles and smiles and the money she possessed, ingratiate herself into the favor" (49) of good-looking men. The crucifix around her neck evokes the religious feeling that informs Clyde's sexual desire; it anticipates that first glimpse into a hotel room where a pretty girl sits on a man's lap, a glimpse that is like "looking through the gates of Paradise" (46). Her large size relative to the tiny figures on other floors of the hotel also suggests conflicting readings. It evokes the prominence of women signaled by the iconic figure of the flapper in the 1920s and also the tradition of prurient antifeminist gender symbolism whereby anxieties over the pleasures and dangers of urban life are projected onto, and come to be symbolized by, sexualized images of women.

Davis's juxtaposition of woman and curtained nook suggests a similar juxtaposition in Clyde's mind when, after he has been at the hotel for some time, he attempts to flatter Hortense, who promises Clyde sex but never delivers: "'An' your eyes are just like soft, black velvet,' he persisted eagerly. 'They're wonderful.' He was thinking of an alcove in the Green-Davidson hung with black velvet" (111). Davis suggests a similar identification between the masked woman and the hotel by repeating her flowing hair and rounded breasts and buttocks in the flowing curtains and bulbous supports of the hotel's railing. Most significant, perhaps, is the repetition of the lace

circlet crossing the V of the woman's genitals in the rope which crosses the diamond pattern in the background. The similarity between the two crystal-lizes the central homology of the image: both women and hotel, that playground of the rich, show objects of desire to poor boys like Clyde but ultimately deny them access.

The richness of signification in Davis's drawing captures the conflicting power relations of gender and class pertinent to Clyde's male blue-collar view of middle-class women. As in the novel, looking and being looked at are central to the marking of this power. The combination of nudity and face mask enables the female figure to display herself yet withhold her identity and intentions, but if at one level this is a resistive strategy engendered by the dominance of the heterosexual male gaze, considered otherwise it collapses her identity into the generic (the femme fatale) and the metaphorical (as emanation of the hotel world). Conversely, the very situation of the figure off-center, rather than marginalizing femininity, suggests the conscious experience of living within the spatial arrangements of the hotel—femininity as the ability to inhabit urban space, as against Clyde's view of Hortense's eyes as simply providing an equivalent sensory charge to the black velvet of the alcove.

In figure 2, Davis does present a specific event, Clyde's seeing Sondra Finchley atop a parade float dressed as an Indian maiden and rowing a canoe—"a floral representation of some Indian legend in connection with the Mohawk River" (236). Immediately following this passage is the text that accompanies Davis's drawing: "With her dark hair filleted Indian fashion with a yellow feather and brown-eyed susans, she was arresting enough not only to capture a prize, but to recapture Clyde's fancy. How marvelous to be of that world." Davis makes little attempt to render realistically the novel's depiction of Sondra; he is more concerned with her effect on Clyde, a "spectator" of the "girl who had so infatuated him on sight" (236). Sondra seems less an Indian maid than a stock figure of the "femme fatale." There is something cadaverous in her crossed arms and pale death-mask of a face. Her body tapers to a point, perhaps disappearing into the prow of the canoe, perhaps suggesting a knife blade. There is enough suggestion of a canoe prow cleaving a wave (note the reappearance of the vaginal V) to suggest phallic penetration, yet the darkness and shape of Sondra's body also suggests a vaginal slit in the midst of all the hair, with her face in the position of the clitoris. These gothic and Freudian connotations suggest how Clyde's response to this "arresting" figure is fraught with danger. But they are complicated further by the two star-and-crescent forms under the V at the bottom of the image. Are these the flowers in Sondra's hair, transmuted to sug-



FIG. 2.

gest Clyde's sublimation of sexual desire and his sense of the "marvelous" in Sondra? Or her eyes, returning Clyde's gaze?

Davis's drawing thus embodies some of the novel's complex looking relations. From the moment Clyde has first seen Sondra after his first dinner at the Griffiths mansion, he has been obsessed with her gaze. He has "a curiously stinging sense of what it was to want and not to have—to wish to win and yet to feel, almost agonizingly that he was destined not even to win a glance from her. It tortured and flustered him. At one moment he had a

keen desire to close his eyes and shut her out—at another to look only at her constantly—so truly was he captivated” (220). To “win a glance” is to be recognized as a self worthy of desire; to see her not seeing him is torture. It is perhaps to show the discontinuity between Sondra’s actual appearance and Clyde’s need for her gaze that Davis depicts Sondra’s eyes twice over, once as mere slits that seem directed above and to the right of the observer, in the midst of images of death and aggression, and again in the eye-like images at the bottom of the page, the starbursts within moon-crescents that may have been suggested by the “brown-eyed susans” in Sondra’s hair. Seeing Sondra on the float has served to “recapture Clyde’s fancy,” and it is likely this fancy that has transformed the flowers into the mesmeric eyes that threaten to capture the gaze of the viewer. The image thus anticipates that crucial moment already cited when Sondra and Clyde exchange the mutual gazes that will ensnare them both. Still, Sondra remains object to Clyde’s subject, her gaze the product of his desire mediated through androcentric discourses of psychoanalysis and the femme fatale. Since Clyde’s point of view is incorporated in this way, his consciousness—and the perspective of heterosexual masculinity—is installed as central.

Davis never fully reverses this gendered gaze to depict Clyde as seen by Roberta or Sondra. The possible exception is the stunning image in figure 3, which accompanies a passage describing what Roberta sees in Clyde’s face moments before the drowning:

And in the meantime his eyes—the pupils of the same growing momentarily larger and more lurid; his face and body and hands tense and contracted—the stillness of his position, the balanced immobility of the mood more and more ominous, yet in truth not suggesting a brutal courageous power to destroy, but the immittance of trance or spasm. And Roberta, suddenly noticing the strangeness of it all— (492)

This complex drawing again combines multiple points of view. On the left Roberta’s face appears looking up as if from underwater, while on the right is presumably a close-up of Clyde’s face as seen by Roberta. But since Roberta never actually looks up at Clyde from the water, Davis is probably incorporating into his drawing a moment that occurs earlier in the canoe trip, when, under Clyde’s agonized gaze, the lake seems “to change its form kaleidoscopically to a large, crystalline ball” in which he sees Roberta “struggling and waving her thin white arms out of the water and reaching toward him! God! How terrible! The expression on her face! What in God’s name was he thinking of anyway? Death! Murder!” (490). The circle

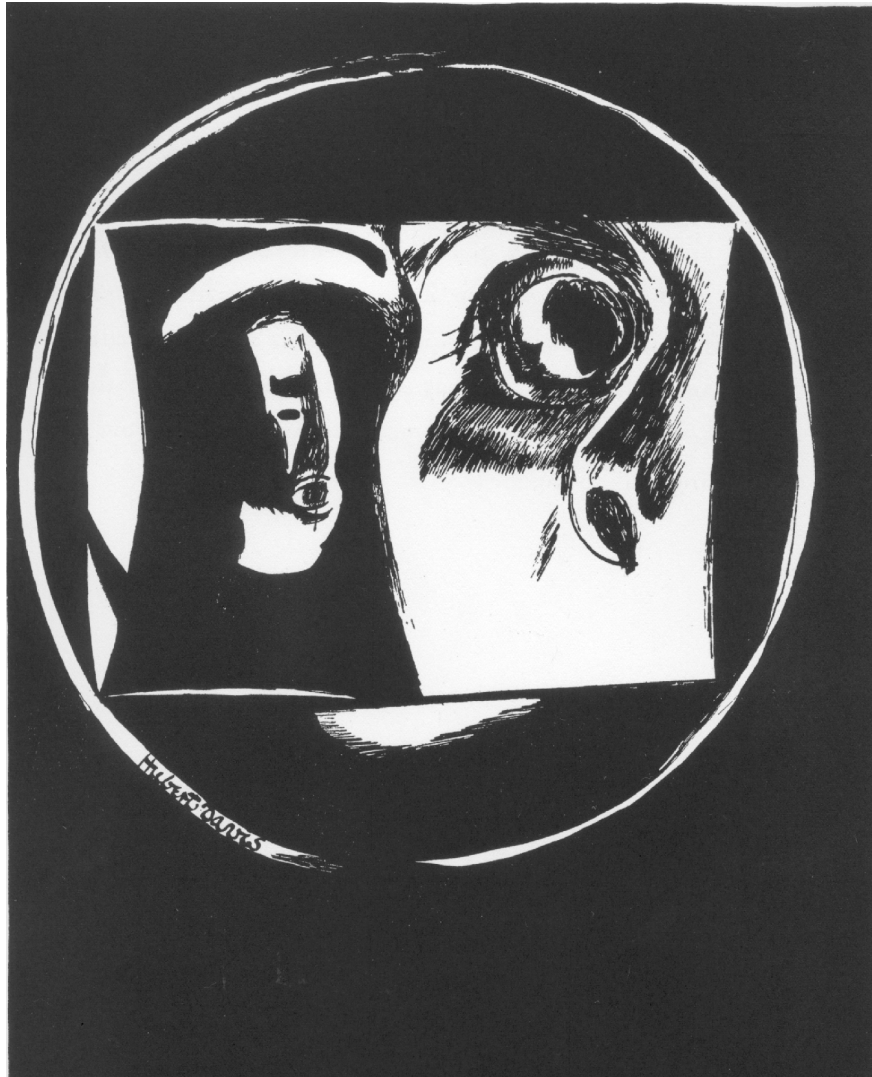


FIG. 3.

around Davis's drawing suggests this crystal ball, and the fact that Roberta's face is inverted and beneath what appears to be a duplication of Clyde's eyebrow further indicates that the face is a projection from Clyde's anguished mind inverted by the lens of his eye. As with Sondra's gaze from the float, Roberta's look is decentered and made instrumental to the consciousness and story of Clyde. Interestingly enough, Dreiser's brief reference in his Foreword to "the scene where Roberta drowns—that eye in the

water” (2) verifies this reading. By emphasizing the haunting nature of Roberta’s gaze, Dreiser ignores her point of view and ultimately places her within Clyde’s consciousness.

Elsewhere in the Foreword, Dreiser discusses the *Symbolic Drawings* in ways that expand upon the doubled but still asymmetrical gendering of this image. He describes Clyde Griffiths as the central figure of the tragedy but with a sense of contingency that mitigates the implicit androcentrism. The drawings are introduced as “twenty commentaries on Clyde Griffiths and his family life cycle” (1), and Dreiser praises “their inherent understanding and epitomization of all that is so true and so sad about that very complicated mesh of misery that was Clyde and his desires and his weaknesses and failures” (2). Such formulations could be read as subsuming the social dimensions of the tragedy under Clyde’s psychology and in turn reducing other protagonists to the status of mere instruments in his biographical narrative. However, these tendencies are countered by Dreiser’s response to the visual representation of his novel by Davis. In a grandstanding climax to the Foreword, Dreiser refers to the penultimate image in the series, which portrays a skeletal prison keeper guarding a cell from which a skull-like face gazes out. Reproduced on the opposite page, the accompanying passage from *An American Tragedy* makes it clear that Clyde is dead (the reference is to the reflections of Reverend McMillan on Clyde’s execution in Book 3, Ch. 34.) For Dreiser in the Foreword, having literally left the scene, Clyde becomes just one example of a vast (perhaps too cosmically vast) series comprising “all that is meant by fate or ignorance, illusion, delusion, defeat, torture, death—the shambling and ragged procession, mental and physical, of those who come botched and defective—unfavored by Chance and hence despised and even accursed of society” (4).

This sense of Clyde as exemplary qualifies the dominance of his perspective and with it the normalizing of a male heterosexual point of view. Halfway through the sequence, image number ten (fig. 4) depicts Clyde’s second attempt to procure an abortifacient from the druggist at Schenectady. The presentation of heterosexual white masculinity as the unmarked norm is one of the most venerable strategies of patriarchal power. However, Dreiser’s own gloss on the image in the Foreword suggests that the presentation of Clyde as an exemplary figure has more progressive possibilities:

Clyde (or put in his place all distraught youth and inexperience, all troubled sense of error and failure, as it finds itself on occasion in this world)—stands before the druggist waiting. That suggestion, not so much of Clyde as of all human misery—of embryo life itself—caught in the toils of circumstance. (1)

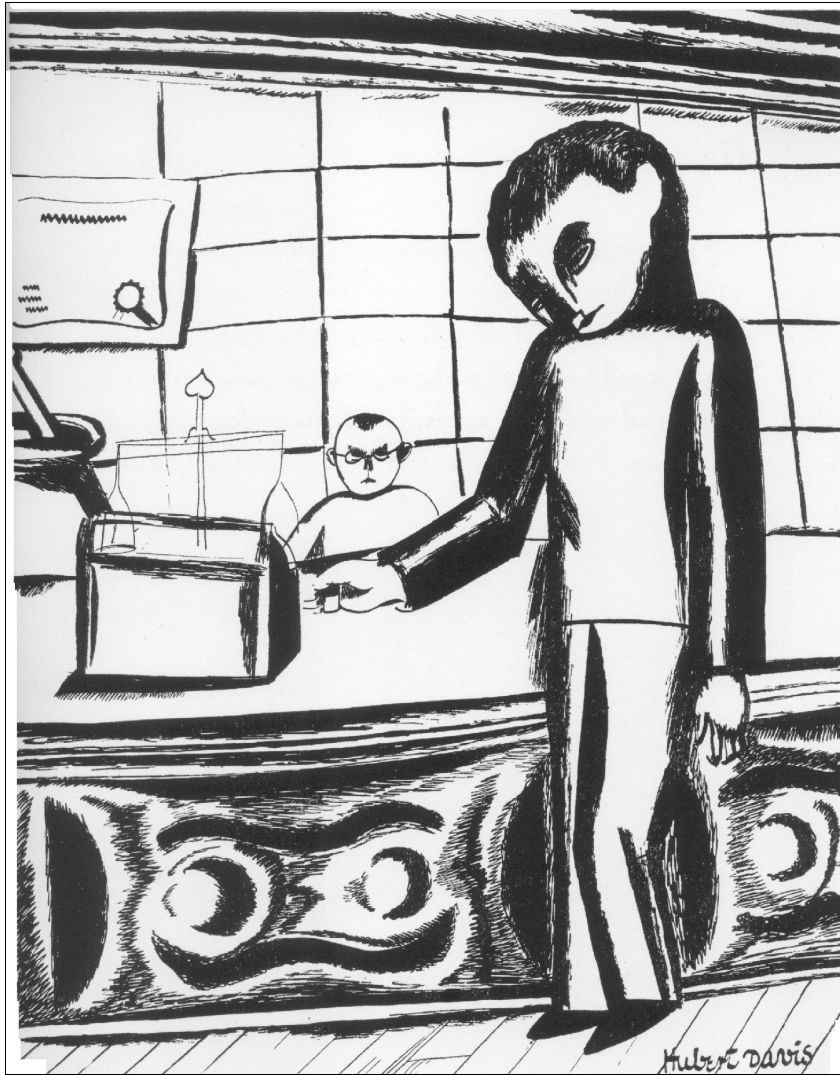


FIG. 4.

The word “circumstance” is somewhat vague to carry so much weight. Its very ambiguity allows the term to pivot between different discourses of gender, biology, and class and to sustain contradictory interpretations. It is certainly possible to read “circumstance” as reducing Roberta’s pregnancy to just another event in the chain that impels Clyde towards death, yet Dreiser purposely dissolves gender difference, viewing Clyde as embodying a crisis of man, woman, and “embryo” at the intersection of biology and

society. Even so, his comments fail to acknowledge the actual historical asymmetry between male and female sexuality and social mobility. This inequity seems to be enacted in the depiction itself—one of the most striking of Davis's images, it situates Roberta and her pregnancy at the center of the tragedy and with them biological sex (conception) and the social construction of sexuality (the classed availability of control over fertility). Of course, even as the figure of Clyde is universalized by the fetus-like shape and inclination of its head, Roberta is absent.

Absence, though, does not necessarily equate to erasure, as is demonstrated in Davis's handling of the episode at Fonda railroad station, where Roberta and Clyde meet en route to Utica and the lake. Chapter 46 of Book 2 of the novel describes how Clyde conceals himself and spies on Roberta from behind a pile of crates. This is followed by several pages of Dreiser's trademark indirect discourse, in which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the reflections that the sight of Roberta prompts in Clyde, Roberta's own stream of consciousness, and Clyde's imagination of her thoughts. Davis presents the scene via two images. One enters directly into Clyde's consciousness, depicting in a series of bubbles the mixture of memories, hopes, fears, and the intrusion of the material space and sounds of the railroad station described by Dreiser. The other (fig. 5), however, simply shows Clyde's countenance as, unseen, he watches Roberta. This graphic exposure of a predatory male gaze illustrates the *Symbolic Drawings* at their most progressive and innovative. It can be contrasted with Reginald Marsh's illustration of the same scene from a 1954 edition of *An American Tragedy* (fig. 6), where Roberta is portrayed directly and sympathetically, but only through the lens of victimhood.

In Davis's drawings, as we have seen, Roberta is the gazing subject only in death. Reproducing the incipient gender asymmetry of *An American Tragedy*, the *Symbolic Drawings* displace the tensions in Dreiser's depiction of femininity into the field of visibility. In the transposition from primarily narrative to primarily visual form, perspective is grounded in subjectivity. The layered explanations of the novel have an equivalent in the depiction of subject positions whose centrality and marginality are conditioned by gendered power. Davis's visualization of *An American Tragedy* thus does not so much resolve questions of coherence and marginalization as foreground the gendered power relations of looking. It therefore prioritizes gender in determining the social relations narrated and explained in the novel.

Davis's images demonstrate the continuing historical difficulty of representing the unmarried working-class mother with agency or, at least, dig-



FIG. 5.

nity. Few critics have noted the parallels between the narrative of *Jennie Gerhardt* and that of *An American Tragedy*, with both novels turning on the “problem” of the extramarital pregnancy. This is hardly surprising, given the earlier novel’s central and explicit ideological project to validate a heroic working-class womanhood against puritanical codes of sexual morality, but the parallels between the two novels are illustrated by debates over the success—or otherwise—of Dreiser’s depiction of Jennie. The depiction of Roberta raises two related issues, both of which are sharpened by Dreiser’s

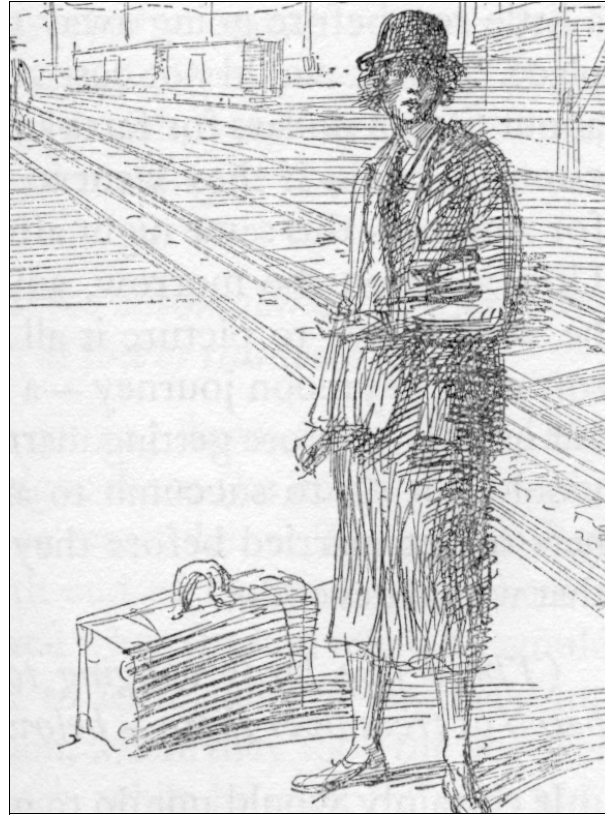


FIG. 6. © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2003

use of the factual Chester Gillette/Grace “Billie” Brown murder case. These issues might be understood in terms of two senses of the word *representation*. Hence the importance of attending to the positioning of Roberta Alden in the tragedy, as paralleling Clyde or merely playing an instrumental role in his narrative. But it is also important, as Nancy Donovan and Linda Dunleavy have demonstrated recently, to assess the historical accuracy, fairness, and value of the characterization of Roberta as a *representation* of Brown and women like her.

Gender, Class, and Visibility in *A Place in the Sun*

A Place in the Sun is the third and so far final film treatment of *An American Tragedy*, following Sergei Eisenstein’s unmade screenplay fin-

ished in September 1930 and a 1931 version made by Josef von Sternberg for Paramount that Dreiser himself came to disown, denounce, and attempt to suppress. Literary critics have often echoed Dreiser's disapproval of the von Sternberg film in milder terms, muting his outright hostility but finding fault with these and other film adaptations of his novels, as, in Lawrence Hussman's phrase, "squandered possibilities." Hussman's 1995 essay foregrounds the ways in which critical accounts of the film treatments of *An American Tragedy* as adaptations have been overdetermined by the issue of the novel's indeterminacy. Such accounts tend to view the films as simplifying complexity and resolving ambiguity.⁶ Hence for Barry Hayne the three versions apply narrow generic frameworks, respectively the sociological treatise, the detective story, and the love affair, while others have described the imposition of a coherent ideological narrative design derived from Marx, Freud, and the romance (Sarris) or, more particularly, the simplification of class difference and the issue of Clyde Griffiths/George Eastman's guilt or innocence (Huddleston). What Dreiserian narrative holds in suspense, cinematic visual narrative has tended to resolve or, more precisely, Hollywood (and Eisenstein's team) have *sought* to resolve. As Hussman suggests, that the von Sternberg and Stevens adaptations fall under the spell of "impinging ideologies transcended by the novel" (193) does not by itself render them coherent. Rather, as Hussman puts it, the "marvelous ambiguity" of Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* contrasts with the "confusion" or "incoherence" of the completed films.

These distinctions have aesthetic and also political and historical dimensions. The aesthetic judgment by which the three film adaptations are seen to fail to produce a cinematic equivalent of Dreiser's complexity can be placed alongside a political reading which distinguishes between the two reductively conservative versions that were made and the reductively Marxist treatment that was not. Hussman's validation of ambiguity is an aesthetic preference dictated by a historical consciousness—the complexity of modern subjectivity—that mistrusts the simplification inherent in one-dimensional explanations of the tragedy such as, respectively, capitalist society is to blame, Clyde is to blame, or love is to blame. The complexity of *An American Tragedy* might rather be understood in terms of the cross-cutting of power relations of class and gender, made most sharply evident in the field of sexuality.

Although George Stevens's 1951 movie *A Place in the Sun* is often remembered today for the performances of its three stars, Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, and Shelley Winters, none of its six Oscars was awarded for onscreen performances. Rather, five out of the six—for direction, cine-

matography, editing, screenplay, and costume design (the other was for the music)—recognized the visual look of the film. In fact, the film's style stemmed from Stevens's characteristic way of working, which involved multiple set-ups taken from different camera angles, such that the final structure of his films often evolved significantly in the editing suite. *A Place in the Sun* not only exemplifies this evolution of structure but is further remarkable for two formal innovations: Stevens's use of close-ups and slow dissolves in which several images are superimposed. Both innovations are employed deliberately to reshape the material as a cross-class love story. The close-ups convey the beauty and glamour of Elizabeth Taylor in the role of Angela Vickers (the film's equivalent of Sondra Finchley) and the intense attraction between her and George Eastman (Montgomery Clift, in the part based on the figure of Clyde Griffiths). The slow dissolves between scenes often serve to juxtapose the worlds of middle-class privilege and blue-collar austerity between which Eastman moves, giving a spatial equivalent to the class embodiments of Taylor and the purposely drab Shelley Winters (as Alice Tripp, the film's Roberta Alden).

As this summary implies, adaptation, look, mise en scène and publicity for the film marginalized the Roberta character, whose renaming as "Alice Tripp" signaled her reduction to the status of a mere obstacle to the hero's narrative. Publicity releases described how second-hand stores were combed for clothes that would transform Winters, previously cast in glamorous roles, into the drabest of factory girls, a change in characterization whose denial of Roberta's attractiveness was noted by at least one reviewer (Lerner). In part, this change resulted from Stevens's desire to solicit audience identification with Clift/Eastman, a wish strengthened by the perception that the earlier von Sternberg film had failed to connect with its audience because of the vivacity and attractiveness of Sylvia Sydney as Roberta, forestalling sympathy with Clyde. But it was also necessitated by post-war economics and ideologies of class, such that the multi-level social hierarchy described by Dreiser is simplified into a binary opposition between the glamorous "haves"—the Eastman and the Vickers families—and the grey "have-nots"—factory workers like Alice Tripp, congregated at one point as a noisy, licentious cinema audience.

Stevens's film depicts this binary class difference through a striking visual and spatial grammar. Scenes set in the houses of the wealthy are characterized by luminosity and fluid, rhythmic camerawork. When George and Angela first embrace, the camera observes them from across a room. They immediately move out of shot, and the close-ups when they finally arrive are all the more effective for having been withheld. By contrast, Alice's

room is almost always dark, there are few changes of shot, and the camera remains completely static for long periods, adding to the sense of doom and confinement. "A place in the light" could have made an appropriate alternative title.

Less successfully, the mapping of nuanced distinctions of social class onto a binary of economic class significantly recasts not only the figure of Roberta/Alice but also gender more generally. Since the two women act as poles of class difference between which George tries to move, there can be no question of Alice Tripp's harboring aspirations of her own. Rather, any desire to improve her status is presented as deriving from her desire to retain his affection—with some pathos, as she begins to suspect his attraction to Angela. As a representation of working-class femininity, the assertiveness Alice eventually displays in demanding an immediate marriage is undercut by the subordination of any social and economic ambition to her love for George. Moreover, Alice's confinement to blue-collar life is naturalized by her dress, demeanor, and appearance, all of which render class (im)mobility a matter of mere performance and hence negates the importance of social conditions, such as the exclusion of working-class women from access to safe abortions.

The visual discourse adopted to depict George Eastman adds further complexity. As the following summary makes clear, the opening ten minutes of the film all but offer an object lesson in sustaining masculine self-presence when presented with overlapping gendered and class hierarchies of visibility. The film opens with Clift hitchhiking by the side of the road. His attempts to gain attention (and therefore a ride) are unsuccessful. As he looks into the distance, Stevens presents Clift's handsome face in close-up, pulling back only to reveal the massive image of a swim-suited girl on a billboard at which he is gazing. A car horn blasts, and a beautiful girl in a convertible (of course it is Elizabeth Taylor) drives past at speed, registering Clift/George's presence but not his need. Finally getting a ride from a shabby countryman, Clift next has to bear pointed inspection by the gatekeeper at the Eastman factory. Once inside, for a brief moment he is framed inside a doorway with his wealthy and glamorous cousin Earl (Keefe Brasselle). While George waits in the dark, another open doorway allows the film audience to see the boss, Charles Eastman, at work in a brightly-lit office. In a masculinized crystallization of *Sister Carrie*, a shot of a tweed suit in a shop window fades into an image of Clift, in the tweeds, *almost* able to pass as an authentic Eastman. In the ensuing excruciating scene, he squirms under the inspection of Eastman father, mother, and offspring in the massive lobby of their house, until the arrival of the shining Elizabeth Taylor

literally turns his head. Next day at work, he again looks over his shoulder at girls being photographed and is immediately warned off by Earl. The factory imposes its own sexual discipline—male and female workers must not fraternize.

As the film goes on, George/Clift is repeatedly discomfited by being positioned as the object of others' gazes—most frequently, those of the middle-class Eastmans and their friends, but also the Vickers' butler, the boy scouts who identify him to the police after Alice's death, and the prosecuting District Attorney, who ostentatiously points at George in the dock. His condition as spectacle is continually highlighted in dialogue, gathering intensity through the butler's ominous "I've been looking for you, sir," the boy scout's "That's him all right," and the film's final, and apparently ad-libbed, line, delivered by a fellow prisoner as he is led to execution: "Goodbye George—'be seein' you." Most strikingly, in the courtroom scene the film presents George as the victim of judicial process through positioning him as the object of the gaze, personified not only by jury members but also by a large onlooking crowd that we are often shown from a camera placed behind Clift. According to associate producer Ivan Moffat, the scene was originally shot to be driven by the suspense of an unknown verdict, but Clift's performance of discomfort was deliberately re-edited to present the guilty verdict as inevitable.⁷

This visual discourse of performative masculinity functions on several levels. In one sense, Stevens has found a superb visual analogue for the class outsidership and "inarticulate experience" of Dreiser's novel. In another sense, Clift personifies a relatively new classed and gendered identity—the anxious white American masculinity of the 1950s, beset by the need to present a convincing spectacle of itself. *An American Tragedy* is thus updated for the post-war U.S.A., prefiguring the "company man." This updating tends to reinforce the tendency toward androcentrism in the visual adaptations of the novel. Paradoxically, *A Place in the Sun* unties the bond between male power and ownership of the gaze considered characteristic of classical Hollywood but re-centralizes masculinity by representing George's social exclusion as a lack of rightful entry. To the extent that the film retains a sense of social criticism, that criticism is predicated on the denial of the chance for "a place in the sun" that, apparently, should be the birthright of all white males. This assumption is all the more powerful for not being expressed—Clyde's fellow prisoners in the closing scene of the film are white and implicitly Anglo-Saxon, in some contrast to the multi-ethnic (Black, Jewish, Irish) inmates of the prison-house depicted in *An American Tragedy*.

This centralizing of white masculinity sends us back to the margins of *A Place in the Sun*, perhaps to read it against the grain. One way of doing so might be to relate Clift's performance of discomfort to his own sexuality, dissimulated to the public. Alternatively, Lawrence Hussman speculates about the possibility of what he terms a "Hitchcockian" response to a film that after all implicates "the audience in George's crime" (192). It might be added that the title itself, derived from Hermann Goering, suggests a troubling connection between the foreign policy of Nazi Germany and the American dream of the 1950s. The pursuit of a place in the sun is never innocent and always exclusionary, Stevens might be suggesting, in a way that forestalls McCarthyite censorship. As Hussman argues, the film essentially approves the class hierarchy, but it is worth considering how it might look from a point of view that identifies with the Alice Tripp character.

As an advertisement for the film implies (fig. 7), the differences in class emphasized by the appearance of Winters and Taylor could sustain multiple identifications. Perhaps primary here is the suggestion of a fantasy identification with the two major stars, Taylor and Clift. Their Mt. Rushmore-like monumentality is the still equivalent of the close-ups used in the film itself to show the intensity of their passion. Their gaze into the middle distance signals the confidence under scrutiny that the film associates with middle-class security, and part of their privilege is not having to be aware of their privilege. This is underscored by the caption. The "ecstasy" and "rapture" promised by the advertisement clearly refer to them alone, relegating Tripp/Winters to the position of onlooker, but this itself suggests a second kind of identification, whereby Winters is recognized as occupying the social position of the majority of viewers of the motion picture. After all, the first time Alice is seen outside the factory (by George and by us) she is a member of a large cinema audience. It is also worth noting that Winters's self-effacing performance earned an Academy Award nomination. The advertisement points to this paradox: the *perspective* of Winters/Tripp is normalized at the same instant that her character is pushed to the margins of the narrative.

This simultaneous normalizing and marginalizing of the Alden/Tripp character enabled, it could be argued, a significant new reading of *A Place in the Sun*, and through it, *An American Tragedy*, not as Clyde's "mesh of misery," as Dreiser had it in his Foreword to Davis's *Symbolic Drawings* but, as Jane Corby put it in a contemporary column, as Roberta's "problem of the unwed mother." For Corby, a certain reading against the grain was necessary to reorient the narrative. Her review reverses the film's order of precedence, opening with the pregnancy issue and with Alice Tripp before going on to admit that Tripp/Winters was on the periphery of the film's pri-



FIG. 7.

mary narrative. "Miss Winters is not the chief character around whom the story revolves," Corby argues, "though she is the force that determines the course Montgomery Clift's life is going to take."

Corby was neither alone nor the first to insist on the centrality of reproductive rights to the tragedy. Two weeks earlier, Gertrude Fairbanks had written to the *Los Angeles Mirror* protesting the film adaptation in forthright terms. As printed, her letter reads as follows:

I am sorry to say that Theodore Dreiser's appeal to the American people in "An American Tragedy" seems to be either smothered intentionally or not understood. I felt that his main object was to show what tragedy and harm can result from our vicious anti-abortion laws. To confirm my opinion I wrote and asked him if this were not the case. He wrote "yes."

Now from the film reviews I have read it seems that the "tragedy" is that a man was executed for an accident. Mr. Dreiser had a humane and splendid object in view but it has been weeded out apparently. I am sorry it has been lost.

The letter elicited a reply from Helen Richardson Dreiser defending the film on the grounds that it retained the emphases of the novel. The "abortion episode," she suggested, "was reproduced on the screen about as Mr. Dreiser conveyed it in his book." Although Helen's comments are another valuable corrective to simplistic celebrations of the gender politics of Dreiser novels, her focus on narrative alone has a narrowing effect. For all its polemic, Fairbanks's intervention is more than a simple reversal of androcentric preoccupations with Clyde Griffiths. By insisting on the centrality of Roberta's pregnancy, Fairbanks does posthumous service to Grace Brown, but at the same time she highlights the fulcrum on which pivots Dreiser's interweaving of class, gender, and sexuality, even as she insists on the primacy of the latter. Clare Eby rightly calls Roberta's pregnancy "the decisive empirical fact in a novel filled with ambiguity" (45). As these various perspectives on the adaptation of *An American Tragedy* show, this decisiveness has as much to do with signification as it has to do with narrative. In the last analysis, therefore, the interest of Davis's and Stevens's work lies less in condensing Dreiser's novel into its "essential tragedy" and more in continuing to proliferate its "text."⁸

Notes

Reginald Marsh's line drawing of Roberta Alden is reproduced by kind permission of the Artists' Rights Society and the Design and Artists Copyright Society. Every effort has been made to secure permission for the use of other copyrighted material. If permission holders will supply additional information, acknowledgments will be made in a later issue.

1. Retailing at \$10, many, though not all, copies were signed by both Davis (on the flyleaf) and Dreiser (under the Foreword). A selection from the drawings was later reproduced in the 1981 Franklin Library edition of *An American Tragedy*.

2. See especially Barrineau, Donovan, Eby, Fishkin, Gammel, and Hapke.

3. See respectively works cited by Jameson, Michaels, and Zayani.

4. There are unremarked parallels in Schleifer's account between non-whites and women as figures of embodied alterity, whose undeniable existence problematizes the Enlightenment project even as they remain on its margins. Hence, Schleifer intriguingly describes the figure of Friday in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a kind of fly in the ointment of a "pure" fable of Enlightenment cognition: "Friday comes into this setup . . . as the likelihood of otherness within the regime of the same" (81). Or again, Friday embodies the local and specific that troubles the same novel's status as a fable for Adam Smith's economics: "What it leaves out . . . is real space and real time: it leaves out Friday" (82).

5. Schleifer's own turn to Foucault at the end of *Analogical Thinking* addresses some of the issues raised above. Irene Gammel and Clare Eby have applied Foucault's insights into the discursive production of sexuality to produce superb contrasting analyses of Dreiser. It is suggestive also to consider the issue of Dreiserian indeterminacy alongside the speculative style of Foucault, especially in *The History of Sexuality*. Precisely because Foucault develops his reconceptualization of sexuality and power through a sustained contestation of the theoretical priority of what he calls "labor capacity," *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* continually suggests connections between class and sexuality. For all the reductiveness of his presentation of historical materialism, and for all the emphasis on what Gammel summarizes as the sexualization of power (signalling both the instrumentalization of "sex" and the dispersed, non-unitary nature of power in modernity), Foucault retains a sense of the agency of class. Indeed, in one sense the book is eminently readable as theorizing the complex historical transmission of "bourgeois sexuality."

6. Bernice Kliman takes a somewhat more positive view of the films, especially that of Stevens, but she still regards them as simplifications, defending them by attacking the notion that they should reproduce complexity.

7. Here and in the discussion of Stevens's motives and procedures generally I am indebted to the commentary by George Stevens Jr. and Ivan Moffat available on the DVD release of *A Place in the Sun*.

8. I would like to thank Keith Newlin and the anonymous readers for *Dreiser Studies* for their perceptive comments on earlier drafts, and Stephen Brennan for a multitude of suggestions and illustrations which I have found extremely useful. Any remaining failings are my own. Thanks go to King Alfred's College Winchester for grants enabling this work. I would also like to thank other members of the International Dreiser Society, especially Tom Riggio and Clare Eby for many—but yet too few—illuminating discussions in May 2002.

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“It Was Written That We Meet”: The Collaborative Friendship of Theodore Dreiser and George Douglas

Mandy See

Among Theodore Dreiser’s long list of friends and lovers, one figure has disappeared from history. His bright smile and laughing eyes shine forth from an old photograph as if he remains ready for a philosophical romp with Genius. Yet his close ties to Dreiser—his collaboration with the “genius”—remain unexamined. George Douglas was an interesting man with brilliance all his own. He was well-liked and moved in artistic and intellectual circles. His relationship with Dreiser was especially important as Dreiser worked on his “Formula Called Man,” posthumously published as *Notes on Life* in 1974. Douglas’s collaborative friendship offers insight into Dreiser’s writing process and into the kind of connection that buoyed Dreiser’s spirits and urged his ideas forward. Ironically, it also reveals the limiting factor of a close personal bond in this working relationship: in their friendship and enthusiasm for ideas, the two men failed to organize their ideas in a coherent manner. Though his own writing is lost and forgotten, we can revive the marvelous figure of George Douglas in part as we examine his contribution to Theodore Dreiser’s life and work.

A Friendship Develops

George Douglas, originally from Australia, had owned two newspapers in his native land, according to a letter dated 26 March 1936 from Henry von Sabern to Dreiser (UP).¹ When he and his wife, Margaret “Molly” Douglas, came to the United States, however, Douglas took a more modest position at the *San Francisco Chronicle* writing literary news, and he had at least one regular column, “Bits About Books and Authors,” for about 10

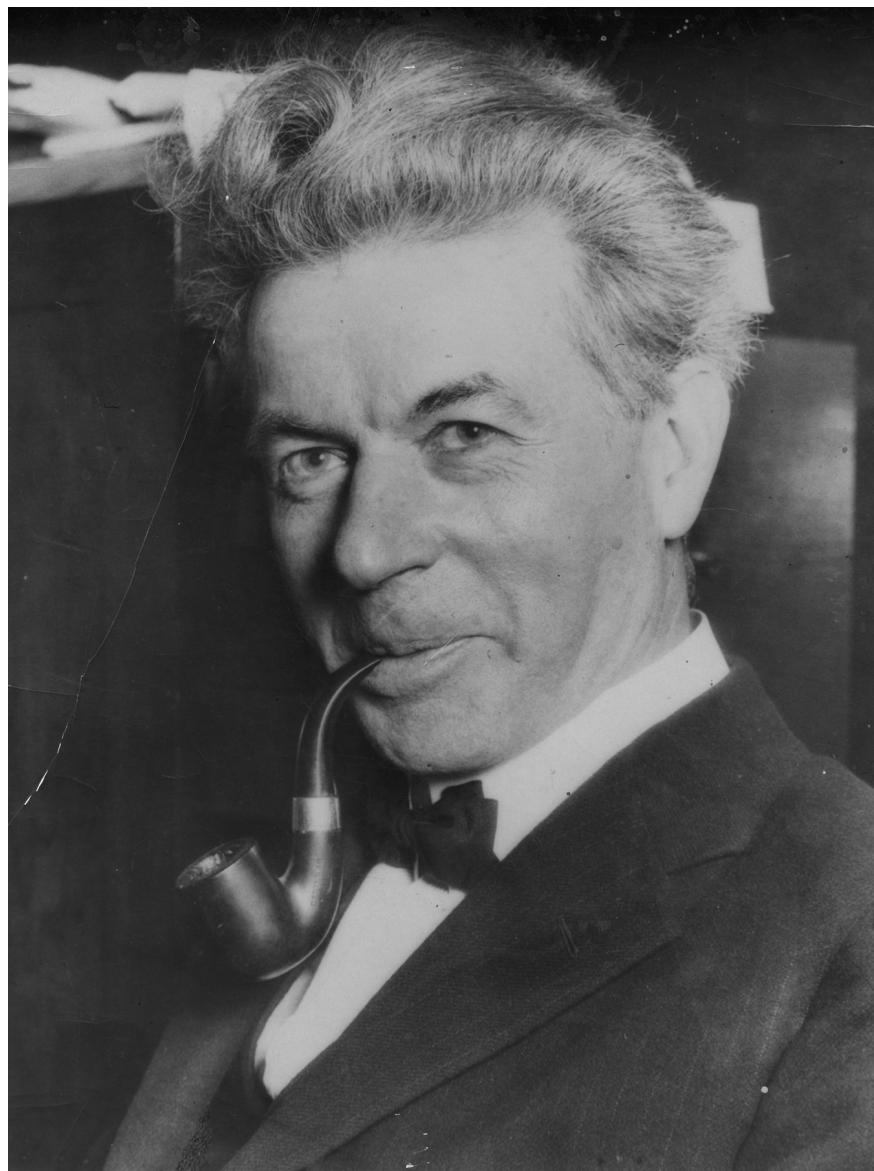
years before moving to the *San Francisco Bulletin*, where he worked for another 10 years. In 1929, Douglas moved south with his family to Los Angeles, where he took a position with William Randolph Hearst's *Los Angeles Examiner* as an editorial writer.

Douglas had literary ambitions, and although his writing showed promise and he was a constant delight to his many artistic and literary friends, he was unable to achieve literary distinction. Douglas's educational background is unknown, but it is clear from his friends and from his letters to Dreiser that Douglas possessed great erudition, later responding astutely to Dreiser's ambitious scientific-philosophic quest. His letters to Dreiser demonstrate that he was especially well versed in philosophy and poetry. Helen Dreiser writes that he was "a great storyteller, editor, writer, and most distinguished man of culture" (58–59); he was "scholarly, witty, and extremely well informed as to current affairs—a man who delighted all those about him with his brilliance of mind and spirit. Having a marked retentive memory, he was able to quote offhand appropriate lines of verse or prose to fit any and every occasion" (247).

For at least two decades Douglas was quite happy in San Francisco, where he was involved with the Bohemian Club, a group of prominent artists and writers, many of whom urged him to publish his own creative work. When he moved to Los Angeles in 1929, Hearst forbade Douglas to publish outside of his editorial column for the *Examiner* for the sake of his "objectivity" as a newspaper writer. Henry von Sabern, a prominent sculptor and a devoted friend of Douglas, wrote to Dreiser in a letter dated 17 December 1932: "Had the sad news from George Douglas that he would continue to be the Archangel Gabriel and blow his horn only in the interest of Jehovah of Saint Simeon. God bless Hearst! For 12 years I have been trying to get him away from playing the holy ghost and come out in the open" (UP).²

Douglas originally became acquainted with Dreiser through his unsigned reviews of Dreiser's books for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, beginning with *Jennie Gerhardt*. Through these reviews Douglas began to study Dreiser, and he also began to lecture on the writer before the two met, probably in late September or early October of 1920. In these reviews Dreiser found a warm critic and a trusted advocate when the world of criticism often stormed against his work. Dreiser later wrote to Douglas, "Years ago when I first read your articles in the San Francisco Bulletin I was not only affectionately impressed but enthused by your viewpoint, and before I knew you, wished that I might know you" (11 Jan. 1935; *Letters* 2: 713).

Every Douglas review offers praise for Dreiser's work, and his criticism



George Douglas, “a great storyteller, editor, writer and most distinguished man of culture” (Helen Dreiser, *My Life with Dreiser* 58–59)

is usually related to Dreiser's style or some philosophic point. For example, Douglas begins his 3 December 1911 review of *Jennie Gerhardt* for the *San Francisco Chronicle* with the positive, "Admirers of 'Sister Carrie,' and they are legion, will find 'Jennie Gerhardt' all that they had a right to expect." He defends Dreiser's use of actual events not as plagiarism but as a very sensible and artistic choice. Later in the same review Douglas writes, "The style has many blemishes, but they are not so pronounced as to be unpleasing" (qtd. in Salzman 79). In this early review, Douglas's appreciation for Dreiser's work is apparent. Although their friendship did not blossom for many years, Dreiser no doubt read Douglas's reviews and was pleased.

The two men first met under conditions that did not hint at the extraordinary tie that would develop. The first really personable letter between the two men is from Douglas and is dated 4 October 1920 on *San Francisco Bulletin* letterhead. Douglas was to lecture on Dreiser at a reception given in his honor in San Francisco. Dreiser refused to attend the public lecture or the reception, much to his supporters' dismay, and here Douglas got his first taste of the temperamental, often difficult Dreiser. Dreiser's absence at the lecture was a slap in his friends' faces, and it seemed to go against their efforts not only to promote his writing but also to support common ideals. Douglas hints at this in his letter: "I had hoped to enjoy talking about your work chiefly because I like it, but to a very great extent because I was going to work its creative vigor in crescendo to a violent assault upon the censorship." Nevertheless, Douglas was not offended but rather amused by Dreiser's obstinate behavior.

In a 5 November 1920 letter he thanks Dreiser for contributing a letter to the newspaper and goes on to jab playfully at the party-pooing celebrity:

After learning that you would be unable to do the Duncan studio affair we consulted as to postponement. Said the horrified Duncan:

"What? Postpone a good booze party because a genius could not attend? Let us go to the bung and then we shall all be men and women of genius. What WAS the genius to this party, anyway? Was he any more than a happy suggestion, a point of focus for our glasses? Not at all—we can now focus them on one another. Besides—who knows but what burglars may get to the barrel. I run a studio not a safe deposit vault."

Two gallons of whisky, a quart of gin, and five gallons of sherry. And the party didn't break up until the last drop.

But this is mean of me. (UP)

When other friends would have been put off by Dreiser's insulting last-minute excuses and refusals to come to affairs given in his honor, Douglas saw opportunity for merriment.

Douglas offered Dreiser space in the *San Francisco Bulletin*, writing in his 5 November 1920 letter that Dreiser's "letter and enclosure [were] received too late for this week's book page, but it will have prominence in the next. More than enough 'story' in it to 'carry' in a S.F. paper" (UP).³ In the same letter Douglas includes a clipping of his article about Dreiser's visit to San Francisco, keeping the writer informed of his publicity.⁴

By 1928 Douglas was wholly in Dreiser's camp. In response to negative critical attention to Dreiser's *Moods: Cadenced and Declaimed*, Douglas mailed Dreiser a clipping dated 8 August from the *Bulletin*, in which he introduced and reprinted part of a speech Dreiser had given. In the article Douglas takes on Dreiser's foes, writing,

Though all his readers are impressed by Theodore Dreiser's amazing energy and industry there is a widespread but not well founded belief that he is a strangely sad not to say soured man utterly devoid of ideals and wholly incapable of enthusiasm.

As a matter of fact, the most realistic of realists in fiction is an idealist and an enthusiast. He could not denounce the world as it is with such vigor if he did not believe in the possibility of a better order of things.

Douglas goes on to report that Dreiser "paid a visit to the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where he delivered an oration on the mental, moral, and spiritual blessings rewarding those devoting their lives to scientific research" (UP). His words hint at the scientific-philosophic connection the two would share strongly in the mid-1930s.

By 1929 the two men were corresponding more frequently and directly with each other, and in a letter dated 1 November 1929 Douglas offered moral support to Dreiser:

Don't be in any hurry to label yourself a pessimist or to accept that label as pinned on you by others. You are not an optimist—thanks to the stimuli that have made you what you are—but you are not a pessimist. There is all the wide world of common sense between the peaks of optimism and pessimism. Leave pessimism to great humorists and minor malcontents. Great humorists can turn it to good account and the merely negative malcontents cannot help themselves. The creative artist and constructive critic of life is not a pessimist. (UP)

Douglas goes on in this lengthy letter to philosophize in support of Dreiser. Clearly, the two had come to appreciate each other's minds and purposes. Dreiser responded to Douglas's flattering support, and their friendship grew.

In his letters Douglas continually praised Dreiser's courage in stating often-unpopular opinions, an ability he must have felt unable to share because of his position as chief literary editor at the newspaper. In the 1 November 1929 letter, referring to the publication of "What I Believe," Douglas writes, "Your credo in this month's Forum is splendid courage, and yet, having it in such abundance, you probably are no more conscious of your courage than an honest man is of his conscience. . . . But there are many others that will bless you for the courage to say what they are almost afraid to think" (UP).⁵ Douglas signed this letter with another trademark remark—" (Confidential—I still have to earn a living.)" And in a letter dated 21 May 1931, Douglas offered the emotional encouragement Dreiser needed for his support of labor issues, even if Douglas could not align himself with Dreiser publicly: "Your answer to the question 'Where Is Labor's Share?' printed in The New York Times,⁶ should be reprinted by every paper willing to encourage intelligent discussion of the only national issue of vital importance. All other issues are piffling when compared with that of the next square meal for the millions of the unemployed" (UP). Douglas expostulates for two stirring pages, pouring out a great deal of feeling that he was unable to publish under his own name because of his job and his need to support his family. Fortunately for Dreiser, Douglas chose to pour his creative energies into making other writers, especial Dreiser, successful.

Douglas declined to touch on Dreiser's concerns only when they dipped into the motion picture industry, which was closely linked to the newspaper. In a letter dated 11 April 1932, with "Personal" underlined and typed at the top, Douglas plainly explains, "You will appreciate my reluctance to deal frankly with anything pertaining to motion pictures. I still need my job or rather my family needs it" (UP).

Dreiser counted on Douglas to give him advice in handling his publicity and to be his advocate against censorship. In a 14 January 1935 letter he asked Douglas for advice about the banning of his books in Nazi Germany: "It appears that my books have just been banned in Germany on the ground that they are subversive of morals and character—the morals & character required to continue a worthwhile society. I am wondering if they think I am a Jew. Many, many people for some reason believe that I am! . . . What do you suppose could be done to alter this German viewpoint,—if that is the viewpoint?" (*Letters* 2: 714–15). Douglas responded, "About the only thing

to be done in the case of the Hitler ban is to give it the widest possible publicity with emphasis on the suggestion 'Dreiser's books banned in Germany because he is thought to be a Jew—cannot a man be a thinker without being thought a Jew?' " (17 Jan. 1935; UP).

In short, Douglas made himself wholly available to Dreiser for any need that arose. His adoration for the genius at times nears infatuation and hero worship, both for Dreiser the man and his work. He noted that his efforts on Dreiser's behalf were "a labor of love" (17 Jan. 1935; UP). In a 28 January 1935 letter he gushes,

I sincerely hope that you are as happy in the work as I am in thinking about it, and I have been thinking of little else in every spare moment since the first intimation that you were engaged on a philosophy. At home, on street cars, in the office and almost anywhere something starts me heading for my infatuation. It is as all-engrossing as a love affair, and as everything has a sex significance to the lover sighing like a furnace, so has everything a significance to the philosopher. (UP)

While Douglas's letters are tender and thorough, brimming with a nearly erotic enthusiasm for Dreiser and his work, Douglas took no notice that Dreiser did not bother to add his signature to most of his letters and often did not even write to Douglas himself but rather sent requests for information through his secretary. Douglas never took offense. His affection grew, as did his infatuation with Dreiser's work. In a letter to Dreiser dated 20 March 1935, Douglas commented affectionately, "we were born under the same star: you on August 27 and I on August 28. Started following you very early" (UP).

Dreiser grew closer and closer to Douglas through the years. Desiring to work closely with his friend, Dreiser moved to California to live with Douglas in the summer of 1935.⁷ Douglas's wife and two daughters were away at the time, and even Helen Dreiser moved into a small apartment nearby instead of into the Douglas home so that she would not disturb the two men at their work.⁸ Dreiser remained exceptionally reliant on Douglas to boost his spirits and hone his ideas until Douglas's untimely death from a heart attack on 10 February 1936.

A Writer in Search of a Venue

Although his position at the *Los Angeles Examiner* precluded the use of his own name, Douglas was compelled by Dreiser's pressing requests that

he publish to write passionate editorials for *The American Spectator* under a pseudonym, "John Adam Smith."⁹ In them he commented on the view of foreigners within the United States ("The American Inquisition"), the American view of religion in Russia ("The God Standard"), and the economic stance of the New Deal ("The Economy of Waste"). These topics fell in line with Dreiser's interests. Dreiser, then one of the editors of the magazine, assured Douglas that his identity would not be revealed. Not only did Dreiser offer a publishing outlet for his friend but he was also one of the few who knew Douglas wrote the articles. We might thus conclude that part of the reason Douglas chose to write on such topics was to please his friend.

For Douglas, publishing under a pseudonym was not an attempt to make the proper connections to become a full-time writer, as Dreiser had hoped he would do and as he claimed to want for himself. Instead, Douglas's activity with the *American Spectator* fulfilled a sacred social convention for him—not keeping a steady job but pleasing his friends. Fulfilling Dreiser's request strengthened their friendship and allowed Douglas to participate in public speech with very low risk to his position at the *Los Angeles Examiner*. It reaffirmed and validated Douglas in his close group of literary friends, the friendships themselves serving as signifiers of Douglas's social position (while they were also important to him emotionally), but it did not risk the wrath of his employers.

That is not to say that Douglas wrote only for Dreiser's sake. After Douglas died in 1936, his widow, Molly, asked von Sabern to help her go through his study, dividing his papers and his books. Von Sabern wrote quite emotionally to Dreiser at the time, noting the enormous volumes of material Douglas had written, his piles of notes and boxes of unpublished articles (26 March 1936; UP). Douglas had written for decades, and perhaps he was more productive than ever during his friendship with Dreiser, whose letters, drafts, and conversations inspired many of Douglas's notes and articles and kept the newspaperman's mind composing for hours. And yet Douglas allowed his voluminous compositions to die with him, while Dreiser fought furiously to see his own work in print. Douglas's ability to put his own work and ambition aside and to focus on von Sabern and Dreiser as writers further demonstrates Douglas's importance as a collaborator.

Although Dreiser longed for Douglas to move to New York and write full time, and although Dreiser offered Douglas a job at *The American Spectator*, Douglas was never able to risk leaving his conventional life to live by his creativity. Quite understandably, Douglas and his family relied on his steady job, and it did not seem reasonable to gamble their fate on the risky

prospect of publishing his creative work. But Douglas also never had the drive to publish. He viewed his creative work as a hobby, not his main vocation. It was a sensible outlook. Perhaps this very mindset sabotaged his success as a writer. His greatest literary contribution remains his encouragement to Dreiser.

Douglas also struggled with heavy drinking, and perhaps this problem was easily masked in the San Francisco bohemian environment. As von Sabern explained to Dreiser in a letter dated 26 March 1936, "He was a Genius at home until he drank—at 24" (UP).¹⁰ In a 14 February 1936 letter, von Sabern writes that just days before Douglas died, Molly had visited von Sabern "with the usual complaint that George had been again in the hospital; and that it had cost 200 \$ [sic] to sober him up. (Also as usual)" (UP). Von Sabern notes that Douglas had fallen victim to bouts of drunkenness in the past and that after a particularly nasty episode one evening in San Francisco Douglas had given up drink for about six years. But when Douglas moved to Los Angeles, "evidently out of boredom he started again, secretly." Von Sabern goes on to recall, "when you left again for the coast he wrote: 'I feel just awful. I don't know what I shall do now'! And I felt like crying out: For God [sic] sake George *don't* drink" (UP). In another letter, still heavily grieving over Douglas's recent death, von Sabern writes, "*To hell with booze* is all I can think of, this curse on fine minds" (26 March 1936; UP). Apparently, alcohol abuse had plagued George Douglas for decades, and this dependency worsened his already tense financial situation with his family.

Although von Sabern could not convince Douglas to write full time, Dreiser supplied the necessary motivation to pull Douglas to New York—until Douglas took his usual moment to reason first. In a passionate letter to Dreiser, Douglas notes his plans to move to New York with his friend:

Your propositions fill me with joy. With such joyous expectations I must allow my emotions just a little time in which to cool down. One does not always reason clearly in such an ecstatic temperature.

Give me a day or two to work out the family end of the proposition before a final answer. The answer of my heart is "Yes, Yes, a thousand times Yes." The head will give its verdict when I am satisfied that the family really means it when saying that it will not stand in my way. I love my family and though it has been in some ways a handicap to me, I have been a handicap to its prosperity. Always I have given the mother and the girls everything over the cost of books and tobacco and for more than

twenty years my books cost me nothing. But they will compare the comparatively small earnings of a newspaper man with those of other men, and it has grieved them to think that I have not done better financially. But they are fair and say that they must not any longer stay in my way. Halley is earning for herself and has been in a steady job for about 18 months. The mother is financially well fixed despite the shrinkage in her [real estate] values. It has been marvelous the way she has held on to everything and actually improved her hold on the properties during the depression. Dorothy has another year to run at the university, but she is enthusiastic about my resigning and going to New York. I should have done that many years ago, but always there was a new house being bought and I would wait until that was paid for, and no sooner was the mortgage burnt or about to be burned than there was another to be cared for with the aid of my job. I drifted along with my books and tobacco, and, after all, I can say without undue egotism that I have been happy in my world of ideas and happy in my work except when the Legrees at the office drove me to more happiness than was good for me. (16 Jan. 1935; UP)

Douglas goes on to discuss his repeated cuts in pay, to speculate about how much he will need to send his youngest daughter while she finishes college (\$25 a week), and to determine the small expenditure he will need to live in New York. His letters suggest he was more concerned with maintaining his social position than in meeting basic needs. He was willing (indeed, he saw it as his duty) to put aside such superfluities as having his own studio so that his wife and daughters could have “this or that.” Douglas’s income, as well as Molly’s rent money, went to a new, larger home for the Douglasses and for the girls’ college education, not to mention for the grand parties held so often at the Douglas home so that the family could keep their “proper” place in society.

But finances were not the only cause of distress in the Douglas family. Although Helen Dreiser describes Douglas as “a devoted husband and father” (247), Theodore Dreiser wrote to his mistress, Yvette Szekely (later Yvette Eastman), “The rest of the family is meaningless to me—and almost to him” (Eastman 152). One of the reasons Dreiser enjoyed living with Douglas is that Douglas’s daughters were away and his wife was staying in San Francisco at the time, tending to her real estate interests there. Molly’s frequent absences hint that she was not altogether the closest companion to Douglas, although his bohemian ideals never seemed to have caused him to

dally with other women. George remained faithful to his wife, as he remained faithful to other social structures, including his steadily-paying job.

George's and Molly's letters show a devotion to each other from having lived many years together, with George often referring to Molly as "Mother" or "the mother," but they do not hint at wild passion or deep intimacy. In fact, Molly's interest in real estate often kept their money tied up—showing her need for social status that Douglas worked to sustain. Her maternal control may have been part of what Douglas dreamily wished to escape in his live-in relationship with Dreiser, their boyish romps an exercise in independence from women. It is unclear whether Douglas drank to forget his family pressures or whether his drinking caused the tension at home. Most likely the two causes compounded each other, yet the need to maintain a close family structure falls exactly with the practical Douglas's typical adherence to social convention.

In his "work" with Dreiser, their endless discussions and letters, perhaps Douglas could mask another dependency besides alcohol: his emotional dependency on Dreiser. If Douglas could not become a freelance writer himself, he may have relied on his friendship with Dreiser to fulfill a deep emotional need. As the above letter indicates, Dreiser filled Douglas with "joyous expectations" and "ecstatic temperature." These feelings were not only professional but deeply personal as well. When Dreiser didn't fill that emotional void, alcohol did.

In a heartbreaking account after Douglas's death, Molly Douglas wrote to Dreiser,

I had been up North for nearly five weeks trying to rent the top apartment. Things were just commencing to come our way. Dot had just been graduated from college, he was within sight of his goal, and then . . . He was planning to go to you about May or June, but it was not to be. Theo, life is so futile, so heartbreaking with its false promises. I have made such mistakes, living in the future, toiling for a little security, so that he could do as he wanted, and for what? You see I had trained the girls to do without me, but he always depended on me, I was his mother, and now I am alone, he does not need me any more. (16 Feb. 1936; UP).

Among his literary and artistic friends, Douglas claimed he wrote for the newspaper only to provide stability for his family. One must wonder, however, if part of his reluctance to abandon his profession was also a reluctance to leave "mother." Certainly, part of his fear lay in losing the social

position that his job afforded, although his position as literary editor provided the opportunity to mingle with writers and artists and to capitalize on his interest in current world affairs.

Just as Douglas's desire to be a dutiful husband and father mirrored his desire to remain at the newspaper, it also reflected his satisfaction of having close artistic friends. As he explained to Dreiser, "Many times I have thought of your friendship for me as full and sufficient proof that I have not lived in vain" (16 Jan. 1935; UP).¹¹ Molly Douglas wrote to Dreiser after George's death, "After you left he used to write something every evening, but when the *Cosmopolitan* people did not take his article, he lost heart" (16 Feb. 1936; UP). Although he had a brilliant mind, a charming wit, and a deep sense of commitment, Douglas, unlike Dreiser, had neither the confidence in himself nor the tenacity to persist in his own creative writing despite the obstacles of social convention. Unlike Dreiser, Douglas was unable to be self-serving and unconventional enough to follow his own fancy and boost his literary career. His reason aided his friends, his brilliant wit charmed everyone who knew him, but his commitment to the tangible world, to being acceptable in society, held him down.

A "sparring partner with a philosopher"

As Dreiser worked on his "Formula Called Man," the long philosophic-scientific project that would later be published in part as *Notes on Life*, Douglas responded to Dreiser's articles, letters, and conversations, offering his own tidbits of philosophy and poetry, suggesting connections to other writers drawn from his immense knowledge of philosophy and literature, and enclosing clippings. Douglas wrote on 3 January 1935, "Show me a new thought, and I will quote you an old poet who anticipated it" (UP). Douglas's keen ability to connect ideas shows in the numerous quotations, references, clippings, and recommendations for reading he included in his letters to Dreiser. Douglas referred to Oliver Lodge, John Strachey, Matthew Arnold, the Bible, Shakespeare, Spencer, Spinoza, Jacques Loeb, Joseph Campbell, and many more. Douglas wrote to Dreiser, "I am doing my best to keep philosophically fit and enjoying the exercise. I read everything in reach that appears to bear upon the scheme" (30 Apr. 1935; UP). Giddy with the endeavor and ever the cheerleader, Douglas confessed, "This business of serving as sparring partner with a philosopher in training for the Twentieth Century Championship grows more exciting every day" (5 Feb. 1935; UP).

After a particularly eloquent philosophical letter in support of Dreiser's

1929 credo, "What I Believe," Douglas ends with "I may have no right to presume upon your patience, but may I plead the insistence of Dreiserian stimuli?" (1 Nov. 1929; UP), as if somehow Dreiser would be annoyed by Douglas's cheerful support of his thought. In a letter dated 11 January 1935, Dreiser wrote to Douglas,

In your last letter (January 7,) [sic] you argue that you can be of very little help to me because I reason things out fairly carefully. This is not so. The two preceding letters were literally stuffed with suggestions for me, and not only that, quotations and phrases of your own which are enormously suggestive and along the very lines that I am thinking. As a matter of fact, yours is the only intelligent response that I have had so far. Intelligent in this sense—that it is *completely* understanding.

Psychic osmosis, almost a mystical form of it, characterized your very first letter; . . . you put in fresher and stronger phrases the very theory with which I have been fumbling for years. And although I have had talks with, and responses from, individuals of considerable weight in this particular field, yours is the only one that means anything to me. . . .

I know as well as I know anything, that if we two were together somewhere you would be the most stimulating, illuminating, and correcting force that I could have. (*Letters* 2: 711–12)

And if this letter did not put Douglas at ease with the genius, Dreiser's letter of 3 April 1935 must have: "You needn't worry about annoying me with your philosophical letters. They interest and stimulate me so much that I am keeping them together in a file for the purpose of reference. The two poems that you sent me . . . apply most amazingly to this entire theory. I intend to use both of them as quotations at the head of chapters" (*Letters* 2: 741).

In a letter dated 22 January 1935, Douglas offers a quotation from "the Bayard Taylorized version of Goethe's introduction"¹² and then explains, "And how it grows. Already I have notes enough to hold us many nights and days discussing pertinent considerations and even possible chapters" (UP). Douglas threw his erudition at Dreiser as if making an offhanded remark: "And talking of notes on that topic one of the best I have read is a footnote in Strachey's 'Dialectical Materialism' on Marxism and the millennium. I will type it for you, for though the thought is as clear as day the actual words are worth while and I have the book at home" (23 Jan. 1935; UP).¹³

Douglas offered suggestions about specific word choices in Dreiser's

manuscripts,¹⁴ and he always felt that editing was his best role: making Dreiser's opaque thoughts more lucid for his audience. He wrote to Dreiser, "It is possible that I may have something to suggest, though it is more likely to relate to clarity of statement than to consistency of thought. With philosophy as with poetry the danger is less a matter of harmony than of lucidity." He suggested that Dreiser alter his method of composition, noting that the writing of philosophy required a different approach than the writing of fiction. He then explained, "My suggestions relate not to the philosophy itself but to the way of preparing it for publication" (1 Jan. 1935; UP).

However, Douglas also influenced the very philosophy that he commented on. He proclaims, "In other letters I shall state a number of ideas to be submitted not so much as suggestions for incorporation [but] as points of departure for your spare time thinking" (22 Jan. 1935; UP). In this way, he helped to shape Dreiser's thought by offering specific and global suggestions about Dreiser's philosophy: "If not a whole chapter there must be at least a section devoted to the myth of morals as anything other than a product of evolutionary processes" (23 Jan. 1935; UP). In this letter, Douglas goes on to paraphrase Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* (1873), dissecting each of the biblical Ten Commandments as mere social constructs (in today's language), meant only for the betterment of the "tribe." Perhaps these thoughts influenced one chapter of *Notes on Life*, entitled "The Equation Called Morality." Dreiser writes, "There are no morals in nature. . . . So-called morals are rules established by social agreement for the comfort and possibly the development of species" (265).

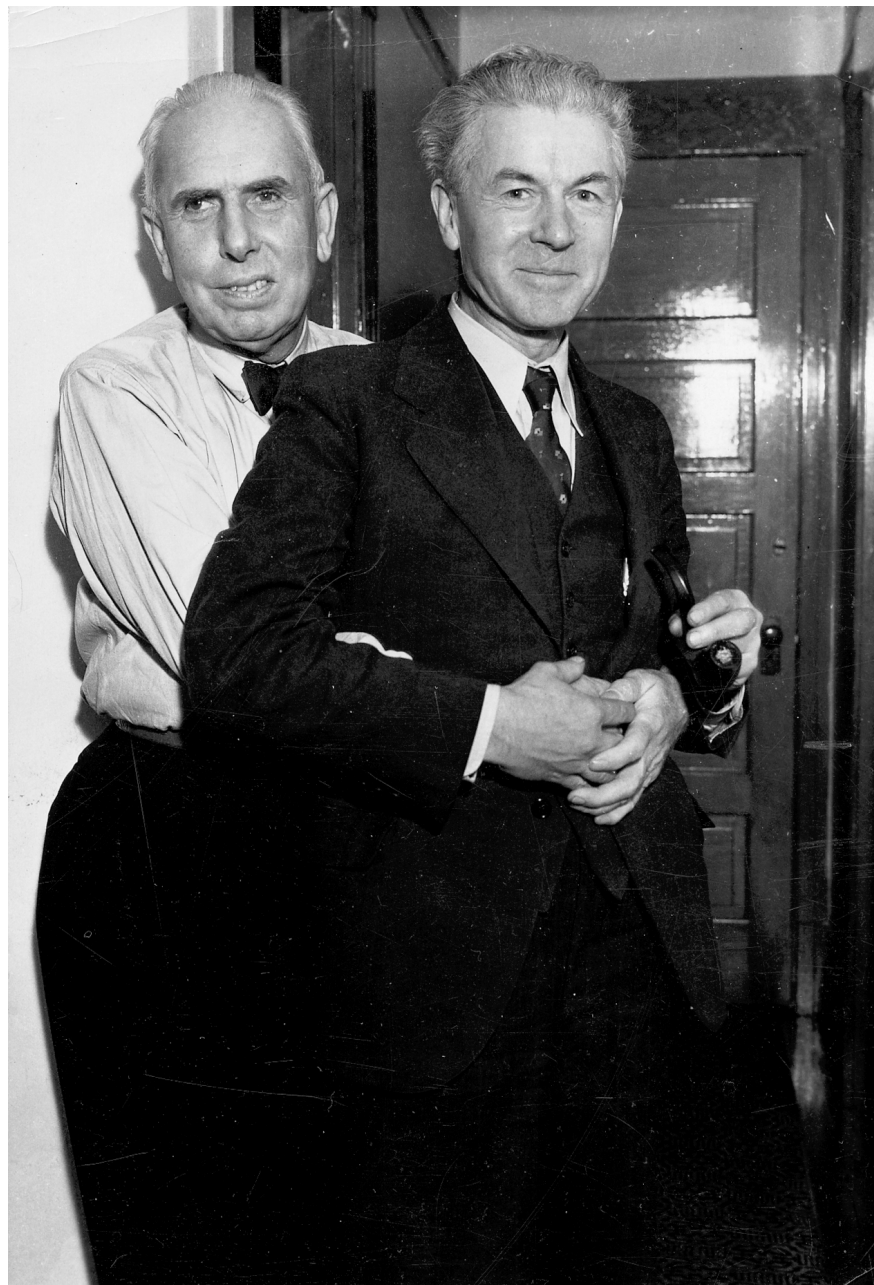
Douglas offered other insights on religion and morality as related to economics. In a letter dated 20 April 1932, he writes,

Prosperity may have played havoc with the Puritan standard of morals, but [the] depression seems to have made people a little more tolerant. People are more 'moral' when they have less money. I am sure the Puritans were more concerned with the cost than with the wages of sin. They hated 'sin' not only because it gave pleasure to others but because they couldn't afford it themselves.

The sins of the flesh cost money—the Puritans would have none of them.

The sins of the spirit cost nothing and accordingly they indulged in bitterness of hatred, intolerance and persecution. (UP)

Two years later he continued the correlation between economics and religion: "There is some poetry, epic or lyric, in all human genius. But the par-



Dreiser and Douglas, "mind to mind, then heart to heart" (Douglas, "For Theodore Dreiser," 19 Oct. 1935; UP)

sons and priests are not poets; they are merely chain store peddlers peddling their second-hand creeds. . . . The collection plate is their cash register and unlike the cash register it is not to be checked, audited or used as a record for the sales tax" (16 Jan. 1934; UP). *Notes on Life* includes "The Salve Called Religion," where Dreiser states,

In all times and in all places, religion must be entirely freed of ulterior and extraneous aims. It should not pile up wealth. Its ministers and priests should by no means live luxuriously. There is no need of dogma or special revelation nor any schools or colleges or orders to interpret the same. Vast costly temples for worship—costly to build and more costly to maintain—are not needed, particularly where their maintenance evokes financial strain on the worshipers. (281)

Whether directly or indirectly, Douglas's letters and conversations regarding morality, economics, and religion made their mark on Dreiser's "Formula."

During the summer months they lived together in California in 1935, the two men spent evenings "arguing," providing the tension Dreiser needed to inspire his writing. On 11 June 1935, Dreiser wrote to Szekely of his life with Douglas, tersely observing, "Science. Philosophy. Ideas for stories. Endless arguments at night with George" (Eastman 150). After Douglas died, his daughter, Dorothy, wrote to Dreiser, reminiscing about the summer of 1935: "I know that he was very happy then and it is a comfort to me that he did have that. I like to remember him in that way—having endless arguments with you and enjoying the pleasure that your company always gave him" (UP).

Those evenings for Dreiser and Douglas were meant for exploration as well as argument, and Douglas opened his home to numerous guests and surrendered to Dreiser's precarious driving. The two men threw parties together, bringing many interesting people to the house and enjoying the company and stimulation of artists and scientists. Dreiser later wrote to H. L. Mencken that in 1935 "George Douglas and I ran a great household together—a fascinating group assembled about three times a week" (10 Nov. 1938; *Dreiser-Mencken Letters* 2: 630). In a letter to Yvette Szekely, Dreiser described having lunch with "Douglas & myself [and] two physicists—members of the California Institute of Technology. And explaining research methods" (3 June 1935; Eastman 146–47). He told her he was to have dinner that night with the scientist Calvin Bridges (150). Like playmates on an endless quest for the perfect philosophy, the two men spent

enormous amounts of time together, their social and intellectual circles merging as they honed their minds for the same project. It would be hard to determine where Dreiser's thoughts became polished, whether in his own head or in Douglas's.

A key aspect of Douglas's collaborative contribution was Douglas's simple ability to listen and to encourage. Upon his death, his wife, Molly, wrote, "He must have been very much beloved, for all sorts of people came to his funeral, men from the press room and the composing room, young people who he had helped with advice. He gave his help to all who asked" (16 Feb. 1936; UP). Although Douglas never produced an eminent work himself, he provided the womb for Dreiser's genius, a place—physical, social, and emotional—where ideas could be born. As a woman in labor needs a birthing coach, Dreiser needed Douglas.

Ultimately, Douglas was so instrumental as a literary collaborator because he did not seek his own glory: he thrived chiefly on his emotional and intellectual connection with Dreiser. He was a consummate flatterer, and Dreiser needed affirmation and affectionate support. He was interested and up-to-date in politics, and he shared Dreiser's political beliefs, but his involvement at the newspaper forced him to remain a publicly objective voice. He was not priming Dreiser for the Nobel Prize, nor did he meddle with Dreiser's many love affairs. His wife got along splendidly with Helen, and Dreiser had no quarrel with the Douglas family, especially since they were away from the house a good deal. Douglas was motivated to aid Dreiser in any way largely because Dreiser's companionship and intellectual stimulation made Douglas happy. Like later fans of Hollywood stars, Douglas found that being close to the famous, vivacious, and accomplished Dreiser gave deep satisfaction and made him feel as though he were on the front lines of creative thought. In this way, perhaps, he was able to resolve the conflict between his desire to be an artist and his sense of social obligation.

Sadly, the very qualities that kept Douglas from achieving his own literary goals are the ones that aided Dreiser's work. Dreiser relied on Douglas to feed his intellect, propel his research, edit his manuscripts, look after his real estate interests, boost interest in his political causes, and supply a supportive, critical, and nurturing voice of reason. Douglas, meanwhile, spent his life plodding along at newspaper writing and doing what he considered to be his duty, while Dreiser always transcended the bounds of social convention to achieve greatness as a writer.

Notes on Life

In many ways their efforts on what was posthumously published as Dreiser's *Notes on Life* proved somewhat ineffectual, since the book remains dense and equivocal. Although Dreiser had several publication contracts with looming deadlines, his interest in the mid-1930s lay in his "philosophy," his gangly project that touched on numerous fields, including science and philosophy, but never really became thorough (in an academic sense) in either. This anti-academic approach Douglas hailed: "You are coming to a philosophy not through the portals of an academy or a monastery, and not as the purely or exclusively reflective type of mind, but from the workshop, from the years of hard working and dynamic thinking" (28 Jan. 1935; UP). Dreiser was convinced that he was on the brink of an important work, and so was Douglas. Since Dreiser had already achieved wide popularity and material affluence, perhaps he felt he could afford to be consumed with yet another humanistic pursuit (in addition to his many political causes), despite the warnings from his publishers that such a venture held no popular interest.¹⁵

Neither man fully realized his own lack of qualification to take on such a task. Neither had formal training in science, and although both read widely, neither was capable of merging the fields he sought to combine. In fact, had the project been narrowed simply to philosophy and science, the task would have been daunting enough. The project eluded classification of any kind. In his enthusiasm for his friend and for the intellectual bandwagon that he wholeheartedly boarded, Douglas refused to criticize forcefully the lack of focus and sprawling nature of Dreiser's scientific-philosophic musings.

Douglas saw the major flaw in Dreiser's project as a lack of an overall plan for his ideas, and he mentioned this to Dreiser on several occasions. His letter to Dreiser dated 17 January 1935 is nearly entirely devoted to issues of rhetorical form, order of chapters, writing habits, and the need for a plan "before one begins" (UP). But Douglas tempered his judgment with apologetic phrases: "But all this is a matter for discussion later. . . . But perhaps all this is annoyingly elementary" (UP). In his flattery and adoration of Dreiser, he was not forceful enough. Perhaps this pleasantness sustained the friendship, but it also limited Douglas's effectiveness as a collaborator. Just as his hesitation and lack of resolve hindered his own creative efforts, these qualities ironically both perpetuated his friendship and mired his collaboration with Dreiser.

At one point Dreiser did, indeed, send Douglas a rough table of contents. But Douglas never forced Dreiser into a solid organizational pattern. *Notes*

on *Life* remains just that, a series of short notes and sketches, each bleeding into the others, none well connected as part of an organized system. Although Dreiser makes many salient points, his lucidity is hampered by the overall lack of focus. In her Foreword, editor Marguerite Tjader affectionately claims, "Dreiser's mind constantly passed from minute observations to the contemplations of matters which stagger the mind" (vii). She concludes, "if there seem to be repetitions of theme or motif in these *Notes*, even under their disparate headings, this was Dreiser's way of composing his literary music" (ix). Dreiser's close friends flattered him too much and were unable to criticize the disconnection of his philosophic musings.

Douglas, too, fell sway to the presence of Dreiser and wrote to his friend, "I had guessed at the inherent unity or harmony of your mental processes, at the fact that no mind could be so facile as well as full and fertile without the corresponding instinct. A glance at your bookshelves revealed the man whose workshop was his mind and not his library and filing cabinet" (28 Jan. 1935; UP). Unfortunately for the public, the "inherent unity or harmony" of Dreiser's philosophy remained in his mind. At his death he left only the notes, the pieces of his thoughts. Though it is evident from these *Notes* that Dreiser possessed a brilliant mind, the work itself has little continuity and begs for better organization. Had Dreiser taken more seriously Douglas's sound advice to form a better plan from the beginning, his project may have achieved greater success.

The more they corresponded, the more confidence Douglas had that Dreiser would eventually work his way through the maze of data he collected to come up with a glorious accomplishment. As early as 1 November 1929 Douglas claimed that Dreiser was "helping to make the bounds of freedom wider yet by removing the restrictions imposed by ignorance" (qtd. in Elias 241). He wrote in grandiose terms to Dreiser, flattering his ego: "The world is waiting for an interpretive analysis that will go deeper and be broader than Marx or James or Bergson or any of the modern philosophers. The time calls for a restatement of the problem plus a rationalized solution of so much of the problem as admits of solution" (5 Feb. 1935; UP). Elsewhere he proclaims, "Dreiser is coming to the grove with a theory of the universe forged in the intervals between writing fiction! These are things that move me—the one to profound admiration, the other to great expectation" (28 Jan. 1935; UP). Realizing how unconventional Dreiser's project was, Douglas urged Dreiser in his pursuit, becoming engrossed in it and taking on Dreiser's project as his own.

Douglas's untimely death on 10 February 1936 ended his collaboration with Dreiser, and Dreiser never saw the scientific-philosophic notes he had

made published. Douglas's statement in a letter dated 5 February 1935 had come to pass: "The honors may be posthumous, but if the ego looks before as well as after there should be infinite present satisfaction in their prospect" (UP). In a warm letter dated 16 January 1935, Douglas wrote to Dreiser sentimentally, "It was written that we meet. To be strictly literal, it was not only written but actually printed many many years ago in a little journal of big opinions," and he goes on to quote a poem (his own "Credo") appropriate to his friendship with Dreiser (UP).¹⁶ For Douglas, Dreiser's friendship brought to life a part of himself he often suppressed; Dreiser was, in many ways, what Douglas longed to be. For Dreiser, the collaborative friendship was essential in creating the life and work of a "genius."

Notes

1. Von Sabern's letters to Dreiser are held in the Theodore Dreiser Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania. Further references to unpublished material in this collection will henceforth be indicated by (UP). I wish to thank the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania for permission to quote from unpublished correspondence and to reprint photographs. I am grateful to Nancy M. Shawcross, John Pollock, Joseph Gulka, and the entire staff at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library for their cheerful assistance. Special thanks goes to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington's Graduate School for a Summer Research Grant and the UNCW English Department for a travel grant. Finally, my greatest gratitude goes to Keith Newlin for his critical scrutiny, scholarly expertise, additional research, delightful visits, and boundless enthusiasm.

2. Von Sabern is referring to Hearst as a deity both because of his enormous influence on Douglas's life and because he built an enormous castle at San Simeon, California, now part of the Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument.

3. It is unclear what Dreiser submitted, for *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide* does not list Dreiser publishing anything in 1920 or 1921 in the *San Francisco Bulletin*.

4. See "Theodore Dreiser," *San Francisco Bulletin* 30 Oct. 1920: 20.

5. See "What I Believe," *Forum* 82 (1929): 279–81, 317–20; rpt. *Theodore Dreiser: A Selection of Uncollected Prose*, ed. Donald Pizer (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1977), 245–58.

6. See "Where is Labor's Share?" *New York Times* 13 May 1931: 24.

7. According to a letter from Dreiser to Yvette Szekely Eastman dated 16 May 1935, Dreiser was living with Douglas at "232 So. Westmoreland. It's a charming

Los Angeles house" (Eastman 145).

8. In *My Life with Dreiser*, Helen writes that she rented a room nearby and typed with Nick, their dog, at her feet. Occasionally she joined the men for dinner or cooperated with Molly to throw a party in the Douglas home.

9. Douglas's articles include "The American Inquisition" (April 1933: 4), "The God Standard" (March 1934: 4), and "The Economy of Waste" (April 1934: 1).

10. Here von Sabern recalls what one of Douglas's brothers had said about the then young George Douglas living in Australia.

11. At times Douglas was moved to pour out his emotion for Dreiser in poetry, as in this poem in a letter dated 19 October 1935 (UP):

"For Theodore Dreiser"
(The night we said nothing. Oct. 14 '35)

Now is the test of all our reasonings;
Of dialectics as defensive art
In vain endeavor to divert the dart
When you must take tomorrow morning's wings,
Leaving me "Kismet" and "the scheme of things"
That brought us mind to mind, then heart to heart,
Only to prove, when comes the time to part,
That every joy its equal sorrow brings.

Oh what a little thing is man! Still less
His power to reason when compelled to feel
The pangs of parting from his dearest friend:
His ego shrinking into nothingness
As o'er his senses sadly, swiftly steal
The taste and terror of all things the end.

12. Presumably this refers to Bayard Taylor's English translation of *Faust*, reprinted by Boni & Liveright in 1930.

13. Douglas refers to John Strachey's *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Covici, Friede, 1934).

14. Douglas commented on the already-published *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub* (1920), correcting a misquotation. He suggested adding "a reference to adaptation as illustrating and perhaps simplifying the law of causation" in "Kismet," which appeared in *Esquire* (Jan. 1935: 29, 175–76) (1 Jan. 1935; UP). He sometimes performed similar editorial service for both published and unpublished manuscripts, believing that the published articles would later be reprinted in book form as Dreiser's "Formula." The bulk of his collaboration remains intellectual banter with Dreiser, giving the "genius" stimulation and affectionate support during his work on

“Formula Called Man.”

15. In *Dreiser*, W. A. Swanberg writes that Dreiser “so enjoyed this cosmic inquiry that he came near forgetting that he had contracted to finish *The Stoic* by the year’s end” (431). Swanberg notes the pressure from Dreiser’s publisher for a new novel and the hesitation to publish Dreiser’s philosophy due to low sales of *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub*. Swanberg claims, “His absorption in the philosophy study had all but eliminated any income from current writing” (435).

16. Douglas’s “Credo” reads:

My God is of the NOW,
 His kingdom of the HERE,
 Wherefore I neither vow
 To worship Him nor fear.

God of the HERE and NOW,
 Erect and proud I pray
 But for the knowledge how
 To learn the most I may.

The future I’m content
 To fashion as I go;
 Enough at its event
 Its good or ill to know.

Let others otherwise,
 Bow down in pious prayer
 For pasts that tyrannize
 Or futures fraught with care.

To carping saints who sneer,
 And hint at selfish plan,
 My answer is full clear:
 “I am my fellow man.”

Douglas then states, “How that last line written in boyhood days lives again now that I am pondering your philosophy! Verily, out of the mouths of boys as well as babes!” (UP)

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Susan Smith: An “American Tragedy” Narrative Retold

Nancy McIlvaine Donovan

In August of 1995, Susan Leigh Vaughan Smith of Union, South Carolina, was sentenced to life imprisonment for killing her children. After claiming for nine days the previous November that her car, with the two young boys still on board, had been stolen by an unknown African-American man, she had finally confessed to drowning them. This case was represented by the press and in popular culture in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways. In the courtroom, the prosecution offered an “American Tragedy” narrative to explain Smith’s behavior.

As defined by Theodore Dreiser, American Tragedy murders are the effect of a national preoccupation with achieving wealth quickly. They are committed for the purpose of upward mobility and sever significant ties of affection, perpetrated by those who would appear to elicit most the victim’s affection and trust. Following publication of *An American Tragedy*, Dreiser articulated his paradigm for “a certain type of crime” which he believed was endemic to American culture. These crimes were later called “American Tragedy murders” after his novel. In “I Find the Real American Tragedy,” a long article published serially in 1935, Dreiser described a type of murder that had intrigued him for more than forty years:

It seemed to spring from the fact that almost every young person was possessed of an ingrowing ambition to be somebody financially and socially. . . . In short, the general mental mood of America was directed toward escape from any form of poverty. . . . We bred the fortune hunter de luxe. (291–92)

Dreiser noted that he had found several variations on this uniquely American crime, one of them resembling the Gillette/Brown case on which *An*

American Tragedy was based.¹ Helen Dreiser later recalled that this type of crime fascinated Dreiser because it

presented the psychological problem he was most interested in. This problem had been forced on his mind not only by the extreme American enthusiasm for wealth as contrasted with American poverty, but the determination of so many young Americans, boys and girls alike, to obtain wealth quickly by marriage. (71–72)

As examples in popular culture of an obsession with wealth, especially among the young, she cites serials in publications such as the *Family Story Paper*, the *New York Weekly*, and *Golden Days*, which represented the "poor working girl" who dreamed of marrying a rich man and who, after much suffering and many sexual temptations, succeeded and became the "lawful mistress of a brownstone on Fifth Avenue" (72). She supports Dreiser's statement that in 1892, when he investigated the Roland B. Molineaux case,² a murder of a young working-class woman by a perfume dealer in St. Louis, he began to be aware that a particular kind of tragedy—one in which an ambitious young man kills "Miss Poor" in order to marry "Miss Rich" ("his true American ideal")—was becoming increasingly common (73).

"American Tragedy" narratives have been told and retold in American culture throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Two plays and two films were made of Dreiser's novel; in addition, numerous newspaper and magazine articles and other products of popular culture evoked Dreiser's paradigm. The term "American Tragedy" began to refer not only to crimes in which the perpetrator was a male attempting to sever his connections with a working-class woman in order to marry a woman of another class, but to murders in which a "tie that binds" is severed for the sake of upward mobility. During the course of the century these crimes have evolved to include issues of race, as in the *Time Magazine* cover story that proclaimed the O. J. Simpson case to be an American Tragedy, as well as of gender. In the Susan Smith case, the perpetrator was a woman whose victims were her children rather than her lover. While the press did not widely discuss Smith's case as an American Tragedy crime, the prosecutor's narrative in the courtroom maintained it was committed for the sake of upward mobility and therefore evoked a now-familiar narrative which continues to have a powerful influence in the courtroom as well as in popular culture. Paul Gewirtz writes,

There is some evidence that jurors tend to come to the trial with a set of stock stories in their minds and that they try to fit trial

evidence into the shape of one of those stories. This suggests that lawyers will have an easier time persuading a jury that this is true if they can shape it to fit some favorable stock story. (8–9)

In the advocacy system, as Robert A. Ferguson writes in *Law's Stories*, defense and prosecution *must* offer contrasting accounts of the same events; judges and juries must choose between them in reaching a decision: "The bifurcation of guilt or innocence does not allow them to mediate or split the difference between tellings" (85). The jury in the Smith trial appears to have taken the prosecutor's side in the matter of a guilty verdict and then "split the difference" in the penalty phase of the trial, advocating life imprisonment rather than execution of the defendant. Thus, juries can exercise some degree of agency within a trial and resist somewhat the rigid polarization imposed by the judicial process, though they still must work within very narrow guidelines. One may imagine that in lived experience there are places where conflicting accounts overlap or converge, where the innocent may be partly guilty or the guilty partly innocent, where it becomes difficult to tell who's lying or what one might do under the same circumstances. It is the imposition of artificial oppositions that Ferguson critiques. Like Gewirtz, Ferguson agrees that lawyers choose familiar stories because they know that their listeners find them credible: "The competition in storytelling caters to the lowest common denominator with competing stereotypes about crime as the gauge for choices to be made" (85).

In the 1905 Gillette/Brown case, the district attorney's presentation combined theatricality with a stock story. He argued that Gillette murdered Grace Brown because she was pregnant with his child and demanded that he marry her. Gillette, he contended, wanted to marry a richer woman and believed he first needed to get Brown out of the way. By contrast, Gillette's lawyers, Albert M. Mills and Charles D. Thomas, told a tale of accidental drowning, later revised to suggest that the victim may have committed suicide. This story, in the estimation of Chief Justice Frank A. Hiscock of the New York Court of Appeals, was one of "impressive unnaturalness" (Brandon 275). It was improbable and apparently untruthful. While conceding that the prosecution's case was based almost entirely on circumstantial evidence, Hiscock wrote in his opinion that District Attorney Ward had constructed an apparently seamless tale, had made "such convincing proof of guilt that we are not able to escape from its force by any justifiable process of reasoning" (275). It is notable that twenty years later Dreiser's fictional defense lawyers received much acclaim for their reconstruction of events; perhaps Dreiser was a better storyteller than Gillette's hapless attorneys.

Students of creative writing learn that a good story often employs literary convention to provoke a response of "Yes, that's how it was" from its readers, and a good courtroom narrative follows the conventions of fiction as well. A courtroom story in which characters digress sharply from the behaviors normally associated with them without sufficient explanation, in which there are many loose ends at the conclusion, in which, to use Chekhov's example, a gun is introduced in the first act which is *not* used by the third act—such a story violates narrative conventions, and if it lacks a recognizable beginning, middle, and end and a plot that unfolds through scenes it may become unbelievable, even if based on facts.

The prosecution in the Susan Smith case adopted a rhetorical strategy reminiscent of that used by George W. Ward in the 1906 Gillette/Brown trial. This time prosecutors had much more than circumstantial evidence; they had Smith's signed confession. In addition they, like the defense, could draw on a number of authoritative discourses—psychological, criminological, sociological—which supported their contentions. For example, in an article in the *Atlanta Constitution*, John Rabun of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported that parents often harm their children to try to save a marriage or attract a new spouse (Melvin A20). These and similar discourses established precedents for a narrative that invoked the murderous mother as well as the ruthless social climber in the story of Susan Smith.

The state's position, as articulated by prosecutor Tommy Pope and assistant prosecutor Keith Giese, followed the recognizable pattern of an American Tragedy murder. Ms. Smith sacrificed her children for the love of the son of a wealthy industrialist, Giese stated in his opening argument. Shortly before the murders, Tom Findlay, heir to the chairman of Conso Products where Smith worked and her former lover, had written her a letter stating that he wasn't prepared for a ready-made family, making her perceive her sons as obstacles to her upwardly-mobile ambitions. The story includes—perhaps most importantly in terms of Dreiser's paradigm—a desire that is close to obsession for economic and social advancement. It also includes a love triangle (more than one, for Smith's husband also had extramarital affairs). A third characteristic of many American Tragedy murders is the perpetrator's existential position: he or she is often victimized before becoming a victimizer. Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths, distorted by a fanatically religious family, is an example. (This aspect, however, was part of Dreiser's social critique and was more useful to the defense than to the prosecution.) Charles M. Sennott of the *Boston Globe* emphasized class as the basis of Smith's victimization, an element that conforms even more closely to Dreiser's paradigm. He maintains that a "desperate attempt" to move from

the working class to the white-collar world was a motive behind Smith's decision to kill her sons (1).

The American Tragedy narrative is now a familiar one in American culture, and perhaps Smith's prosecutors believed they could rely on the power of recognition to convince jurors of the credibility of their construction of events. In addition, it was necessary to depict the defendant as calculating as well as ambitious in order to demonstrate premeditation and therefore win a death sentence. "For nine days in the fall of 1994, Susan Smith looked this country in the eyes and lied," Keith Giese argued in opposition to the defense's contention that it was merely a "childish lie." "She knew right from wrong," Giese continued. "She could control her actions if she wanted to, and she did not. . . . The stumbling block to Mrs. Smith getting Tom Findlay back was her children. Mrs. Smith removed that obstacle from her life. This is a case of selfishness, of 'I, I, I' and 'me, me, me.' . . . Never abandon your common sense" (qtd. in Bragg, "Arguments Begin" A10). Giese's appeal to the jury's common sense suggests that an evaluation of Smith's behavior would lead to conclusions that are obvious to a rational person. "But common sense," Ferguson writes, "as anthropologists have begun to show, is basically a culturally constructed use of experience to claim self-evidence; it is no more nor less than 'an authoritative story' made out of the familiar" (87). The jury's "common sense," however, led them to similar conclusions to those of the but prosecution but calling for lighter punishment, suggesting there is some variation among culturally constructed narratives of experience.

The defense also called on the jury's common sense, contesting and redefining the term. While Giese maintained that common sense would result in a cool appraisal of the facts of the case, the defense argued that it would lead to a compassionate appraisal of Smith's behavior. Both narratives are familiar ones in late-twentieth-century America, and both have an established tradition within and beyond courtroom discourse. Both might be judged persuasive. While Gillette's lawyers did a competent job of arguing that he was a cowardly but decent young man who panicked at the scene of a boating accident and ran away, and while character witnesses were permitted and used, the thrust of the defense's efforts seemed to be at refuting the charges against him. Unlike Dreiser, they did not introduce many details of his early life, nor did they ask the jury to understand the mitigating psychological circumstances to the extent that Smith's defense team did. It is not even clear that such a defense would have been considered relevant in 1906. That Smith's prosecutors obtained less success than Gillette's may be due in part to increasingly sophisticated narratives on the part of defense

lawyers. It is no longer sufficient to argue only that the state has not presented its case very well. Susan Smith's lawyers knew they must present a compelling counter-narrative to the state's. The demands on Smith's prosecutors were equally high. As Rick Bragg of the *New York Times* writes,

To make a death-penalty case forcefully, prosecutors still have to pursue a strategy not entirely unlike those of race-baiting prosecutors of the past. They have to transform a client from one of "us," a member of the human community, to one of "them," the predators who would destroy it. ("Two Crimes" 4: 1)

"What you have to remember," South Carolina Criminal Defense lawyer I. S. Leevy Johnson told *Time*, "is death-penalty cases never turn on legal, technical arguments. They turn on emotions, attitudes" (qtd. in Glieck 31). Elizabeth Glieck suggests that Smith had the "home court advantage"; members of her community may have been reluctant to execute her because she was one of "Union's own," not alien or threatening enough for the death penalty.

Defense attorneys David Bruck and Judy Clarke begged the jury to "look into their hearts and find a disturbed, childlike figure who, after a lifetime of sadness, just snapped like a dry twig" (qtd. in Bragg, "Arguments Begin" A10). This move to construct Smith as childlike, vulnerable, and irrational is reminiscent of the prosecution's portrayal of Grace Brown in the 1906 trial of Chester Gillette. In both cases, the purpose was to portray the subject according to an acceptable model of femininity and thus to reduce her degree of culpability (Brown was unacceptably pregnant at the time of her death) and win the jury's sympathy. In both cases, the model was a recognizable one, in which femininity was defined as fragility, helplessness, emotional instability, and immaturity. While the deployment of this model did not succeed in changing Susan Smith from Medea to an "angel of the house" in most popular discourse, it did re-present her as softer, more conventional, and thus, perhaps, more human than she was depicted in earlier discourse of the trial. That nineteenth-century constructions of gender endured in American courtrooms in the 1990s is worthy of note. Reading court narratives, one might conclude that the "quality of mercy" does not drop down from heaven, as Shakespeare wrote, but hinges—for a woman—on her conformity to popular notions of femininity.

Prosecutor Tommy Pope, who was born in Rock Hill, South Carolina, was educated at University of South Carolina at Columbia law school, and posed for *People Weekly* holding his living five-year-old son ("The Ultimate Price" 76), was also thought to have the "home-court advantage."

Pope believed he had listened closely to the people of Union County and was responding to their concerns. Pope conceded to *People Weekly* that he sometimes becomes “extremely emotional” in the courtroom, in contrast to the low-keyed style of defense attorney David Bruck (77). Bruck was born into a privileged family in Montreal. He earned an undergraduate degree at Harvard, then chose to attend the University of South Carolina law school in order to counsel unwilling inductees at Fort Jackson during the Vietnam war. He is known as an advocate for the defenseless. Bruck remained in practice in South Carolina and now has an office above a sandwich shop in Columbia (“Death on Trial” 70). While not the richest or most conspicuous lawyer in South Carolina, he is one of its most respected defense lawyers.

In addition to the narrative an attorney constructs to explain the defendant, his or her own self-presentation becomes a crucial element in the courtroom drama. Bruck’s upper-class speech and mannerisms might have marked him as an “outsider” in comparison to Pope, but as South Carolina defense attorney Jack Swerling noted, “He’s not flamboyant or aggressive in court. He’s more like an artist. He’ll beat the prosecutor on technique and the law. He’s quiet but deadly” (“Death on Trial” 70). Pope, on the other hand, was represented as down-to-earth, sincere and trustworthy—sterling qualities for a prosecutor.

Both prosecution and defense in the Susan Smith trial performed creditably, both produced narratives that were well-constructed, familiar, and cohesive. Self-presentation and dueling narratives: a surprisingly simple context in which Americans made decisions about guilt and innocence, life and death, at the end of the twentieth century. Robert Wesiberg writes,

The truly subversive power of legal narrative does more than undermine a supposedly widespread belief that lawyers tell the objective truth. It has more to do with taking a society’s narratives so seriously as to carry their imminent possibilities of meaning beyond the limits that lawmakers who use narratives impose. (66)

If narrative, as Paul Gewirtz suggests, is increasingly coming to be seen as the social construction of reality, then courtroom stories are perhaps our best and only approach to truths, arguably as reliable as older notions of factual objectivity. “Our literary sense of how stories go together . . . may govern life as well as literature more than [one] is willing to allow,” writes Peter Brooks (19). More than seventy-five years after Dreiser defined them, American Tragedy murder narratives remain significant ones in courtrooms and in popular culture. Dreiser’s paradigm has proven to be an enduring one.

Notes

1. See Nancy Donovan, "Representing Grace Brown: The Working Class Woman in 'American Tragedy' Murder Narratives," *Dreiser Studies* 31.2 (2000): 3–21.

2. See Kathryn M. Plank, "Dreiser's Real American Tragedy," *Papers on Language and Literature* 27 (1991): 268–87; and Kathryn M. Plank, ed., "The Rake," *Papers on Language and Literature* 27 (1991): 45–73.

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Review-Essay: Dreiser on the Web

Roger W. Smith

A search on the google.com Internet search engine conducted in March 2003 produced approximately 36,700 hits using the search term “Dreiser.” This number would seem to indicate that there is a wealth of Dreiser-related material all over the Internet. In actuality, however, this does not seem to be the case. Potentially valuable information on Dreiser is confined by and large to very few sites. Much of what is on the web related to Dreiser is of marginal or dubious value, especially to Dreiser scholars. Web sites with Dreiser content range from term paper mills that offer execrable papers on *Sister Carrie*, which appear in several cases to have been written by “grammatically challenged” term paper writers, to the University of Pennsylvania Library’s superbly designed and tremendously informative DreiserWebSource, which contains valuable reference materials on Dreiser and a detailed, box-by-box and folder-by-folder inventory of the university’s Dreiser collection. The Internet provides ready access to libraries and other repositories containing Dreiser papers or papers of individuals with whom Dreiser was connected during his lifetime (e.g., Robert Elias, Marguerite Tjader Harris). Such sites can be extremely useful. There are six major library repositories of Dreiser papers, all of which have a web site, and in most cases the contents of the collections are inventoried in detail.

The web can also point the scholar to other repositories where Dreiser materials can be found—for example, Dreiser correspondence scattered among various collections of private papers and records of literary agents and publishing firms that had dealings with Dreiser. Locating such material can be made much easier with a search on the web, which can be accomplished efficiently if one has an idea of what one is looking for.

There is a wealth of materials available on the Internet in PDF and JPG format—which are file extensions indicating that the content of a page is a facsimile image of an actual document or photograph. These images consist

of letters and photos that the scholar can view electronically on his or her computer screen without having to go to a library or private collection. There are hundreds of photos of Dreiser and associates at all phases of his life available on the web, all of which can be downloaded. And there are hundreds of images of actual letters from and to Dreiser. The University of Pennsylvania Library's DreiserWebSource site is truly outstanding in this regard.

One can also make serendipitous discoveries about Dreiser on the web. For example, at the site "Script for August 27, 1996," *Merriam-Webster's Word for the Wise* <<http://www.m-w.com/textonly/wftw/82796.htm>>, I found to my surprise that more than two dozen entries in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* cite Dreiser's prose as examples of usage.

Sites with Dreiser-related content contain the following types of materials ranked in descending order from the potentially most to least useful:

1. Web sites dedicated to Dreiser.
2. Inventories of Dreiser archives and Dreiser-related collections.
3. Bibliographies.
4. E-texts of Dreiser works and of others connected with the study of Dreiser.
5. Sites and repositories devoted to individuals and institutions with whom Dreiser was connected during his career. These include, among others, the Robert Elias papers, the Marguerite Tjader Harris papers, the Street and Smith archive, and the web site of the Charles Fort Society.
6. Sites devoted to authors (e.g., author societies) connected with Dreiser either directly or indirectly because of their association with literary naturalism.
7. A small number of academic papers on Dreiser in electronic format. Some books and articles are available through proprietary services that require a subscription fee. In addition, some key, seminal articles on Dreiser and literary naturalism are posted on line for free.
8. Teaching aids related to Dreiser and his works and a limited amount of introductory material about naturalism in American literature.
9. Online encyclopedia entries on Dreiser.
10. Sites with information about Dreiser-related films and plays.
11. Miscellaneous material on Dreiser of value from a biographical or factual point of view.

12. Misrepresentation and misappropriation of Dreiser on the web.

Criteria for Selection

It is difficult to be exhaustive when dealing with a “database” as vast as the World Wide Web, but I have tried to be exhaustive in covering Dreiser-related web content. The following criteria were used in selecting which web sites to inventory and review:

- The degree of value for a Dreiser scholar. Is there something that can be found there that is not available elsewhere (or is presented in such a way to make it worthwhile to visit the site)? This could include a fact or opinion, a reminiscence, a piece of biographical data that might escape notice elsewhere. Accordingly, this review includes both sites that are devoted to Dreiser and/or contain substantial content about him as well as those that merely mention him in passing. It also includes web sites that provide useful background information about individuals connected with Dreiser or his works (e.g., Charles T. Yerkes, the Gillette murder case).
- Materials that can ease or otherwise facilitate a scholar’s access to Dreiser materials. These include, for example, e-texts of books and articles by and about Dreiser, web text (HTML) of Dreiser-related correspondence, and facsimiles of Dreiser-related correspondence. An astonishing amount of correspondence is available in facsimile, which can greatly ease the scholar’s task. Most of the correspondence is in one place, the University of Pennsylvania Library, and can be found on the library’s web site devoted to Dreiser, but in other cases a letter or two may be found at other sites or at the web site of an auction house seeking to sell an autograph letter from or to Dreiser. All libraries and repositories with web sites that contain any Dreiser-related correspondence (or other Dreiser-related materials) are listed below. At the least, one can learn of the existence, location, and access to such a collection, and several library web sites provide detailed inventories of the Dreiser-related materials in their possession.
- E-texts of Dreiser-related books and articles. Textual materials vary widely in terms of depth and importance and even in terms of how elegantly the page is designed. (Some pages of e-text are dreary to look at, “typographically” speaking.) All Dreiser-related writings posted on the Internet (or those originally published on the Internet) are included here. Web links to Dreiser-related publications can be used to comple-

ment traditional library research. Some Dreiser materials available on line as e-text require a subscription to access, and such instances are noted where applicable. Those databases providing access to full-text versions of print journals (such as JSTOR and EBSCOhost) and which are available only through subscription have not been included.

- Another criterion for inclusion is a site's helpfulness to students, and only those sites which provide accurate and helpful information concerning Dreiser are included. No attempt has been made to be exhaustive here.
- Finally, only those author or society sites with relevance to Dreiser studies are included.

Note: to aid in the use of this review, this article appears simultaneously with publication on the Dreiser Society web site at <<http://www.uncw.edu/dreiser/>>, with active hyperlinks and cross-references.

1. Web Sites Dedicated to Dreiser

DreiserWebSource. University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia, PA.
<<http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/dreiser/>>.

This superbly-designed, user-friendly site contains a wealth of material:

- A Register for the Theodore Dreiser Papers, compiled by Julie A. Reahard and Lee Ann Draud. This inventory of the contents of the library's Dreiser collection is well organized and detailed. One can browse the contents of the collection either sequentially, by means of a Container List (box by box, sequentially) or topically by broad subject categories (e.g., Correspondence, TD Writings, Legal Matters, TD Diaries, Biographical Material, etc.).
- A facsimile of the 1900 typescript of *Sister Carrie* (the one revised by Dreiser, his wife Sara, and his friend Arthur Henry).
- Both a facsimile and searchable text of the first edition of *Sister Carrie* published by Doubleday, Page & Co. in 1900.
- Searchable text of the Pennsylvania edition (1981) of *Sister Carrie*.
- Essays about the contexts and texts of *Sister Carrie* by Clare Eby and James L. W. West III.
- Essays on Dreiser's reputation and life by Donald Pizer and Thomas P. Riggio. The Riggio biography is the best and most complete Dreiser

biography available on the web.

- Roark Mulligan's groundbreaking article "Dreiser's Private Library" (originally published in *Dreiser Studies* 33.2 [2002]), which contains a complete listing of the books in Dreiser's private library.
- "Sister Carrie: 'A Strangely Strong Novel in a Queer Milieu,'" a virtual exhibition created by Nancy M. Shawcross, curator of manuscripts at the Penn Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The virtual exhibition's contents include essays on the composition and publication of *Sister Carrie* and the role played by figures such as Dreiser's sister Emma, his brother Paul, his wife Sara, and his friend Arthur Henry.
- Dreiser correspondence files, maintained by the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image (SCETI) at the University of Pennsylvania. By clicking on links, one can view facsimiles of letters to, from, and about Dreiser. An enormous amount of correspondence is included. The letters are indexed alphabetically by name of correspondent. The user also has the option of searching for correspondence by name of correspondent or a date range.
- An extensive collection of photographs and a film clip. The photographs are from the library's Theodore Dreiser Papers and W. A. Swanberg Papers. Photos available on line range in date from 1894 to 1945. Included are photographs from albums compiled by Dreiser's second wife, Helen. There is also a downloadable silent film clip of Dreiser and Harriet Bissell at Dreiser's residence Iroki, in Mt. Kisco, NY, made by Robert Elias in May 1938.
- An online version of *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*, ed. Donald Pizer, Richard W. Dowell, and Frederic E. Rusch (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1991).

International Theodore Dreiser Society. <<http://www.uncw.edu/dreiser/>>. The site contains:

- Tables of contents for issues of *Dreiser Studies* from the present back to spring 1997 (vol. 28 no. 1).
- An index to *Dreiser Studies* (and its predecessor, *The Dreiser Newsletter*) from vols. 1 through 30 (1970–1999).
- A Dreiser Checklist, the annual series of supplements to *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*. Available on line are:
 - * 1990 Bibliography from *Dreiser Studies* 23.2 (1992)

- * 1991 Bibliography from *Dreiser Studies* 30.2 (1999)
- * 1992 Bibliography from *Dreiser Studies* 31:1 (2000)
- * 1993–1997 Bibliography from *Dreiser Studies* 31:2 (2000)

2. Inventories of Dreiser Archives

a. Library Collections

[See also above, 1. Web Sites Dedicated to Dreiser: DreiserWebSource.]

Papers of Theodore Dreiser. Clifton Waller Barrett Library of American Literature, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA.
 <<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/uva-sc/vivadoc.pl?file=viu02724.xml>>. Next to the University of Pennsylvania's collection, this is the largest repository of Dreiser papers. A detailed and searchable finding aid to the collection is available on line; noteworthy items include manuscripts of *Jennie Gerhardt* and galley proofs of *An American Tragedy*.

Lilly Library. Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
 <<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/collections.shtml>>. Dreiser-related collections of the Lilly Library are divided into several subgroups that can be accessed via links—namely, Dreiser Mss.; Dreiser Mss. II; Dreiser Mss. III; Dreiser Mss. IV; Dresser Mss. (Paul Dresser materials). Materials include drafts of *Dawn*, correspondence with Dreiser's first wife, Sara Osborne White, Dreiser's correspondence as editor of *The Delineator*, and other correspondence and manuscripts. Brief descriptions of each collection are provided.

Manuscripts and Archives Division. New York Public Library, New York, NY.
 <http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/williams/williams/@Generic__BookTextView/12642>. Provides a brief description of the library's holdings of Dreiser material, which consist of the holographs of *Sister Carrie* and *The Hand of the Potter*.

Theodore Dreiser Collection. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY.
 <<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM04604.html>>. The collection consists chiefly of letters by, to, or about Dreiser, as well as the papers of Dreiser biographer Robert H. Elias. A description and container list are online.

Theodore Dreiser Collection. Special Collections & Archives, Robert W.

Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

<<http://web.library.emory.edu/libraries/speccolls/guides-lit-am.html>>. The collection consists mainly of materials collected by Dreiser's niece, Vera Dreiser, for her book *My Uncle Theodore* (1976). The web site provides a brief description of the collection.

b. Historical Societies

Theodore Dreiser Papers. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN.

<http://www.indianahistory.org/library/manuscripts/collection_guides/tddreis.html>. The collection comprises three folders of correspondence between 1935 and 1937 and an address book. A detailed finding aid is available online.

Theodore Dreiser/Paul Dresser Collection. Special Collections, Vigo County Public Library, Terre Haute, IN.

<<http://www.vigo.lib.in.us/vcplspc/>>. The library has two collections related to Dreiser and his brother Paul: (1) a repository of newspaper clippings about Theodore Dreiser and Paul Dresser; (2) a restricted archive containing materials about the Dreiser family. Existence of collection noted; no details. (At links to "Community Archives" and "Guide to Archival Collections—Authors.")

c. Persons Connected with Dreiser

Robert H. Elias Papers. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY.

<<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMA01848.html>>. At present, the container list is under development.

Marguerite Tjader Harris Papers. Special Collections Division, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

<<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/dept/speccoll/tjader.htm>>. Harris was the author of *Theodore Dreiser: A New Dimension* (1965) and a posthumously published memoir, *Love That Will Not Let Me Go: My Time with Theodore Dreiser* (1998), and coeditor of Dreiser's *Notes on Life*. The site contains a folder listing.

Dorothy Dudley Harvey Papers. River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY.

<<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/rbk/harvey.stm>>. Dorothy Dudley was the author of a biography and *appréciaton* of Dreiser, *Forgotten Frontiers: Dreiser and the Land of the Free* (1932). Many of the letters in this col-

lection contain the reactions of her correspondents to the book. The largest segment of the correspondence in the collection is from Dreiser. Also included are typescripts of four Dreiser poems. An inventory of letters in the collection is provided.

Ruth Epperson Kennell Papers. University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR. <<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/speccoll/mss/women/childau.html>>. Includes manuscripts, photographs, and correspondence of Dreiser secretary and author of *Theodore Dreiser and the Soviet Union* (1969). A brief summary is provided.

John Howard Lawson Papers. Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. <<http://www.lib.siu.edu/spcol/inventory/SC016.html>>. Includes correspondence from Dreiser, a copy of Dreiser's memorial service, copies of two papers by Dreiser ("My Creator" and "Why I Became a Communist"), letters of Helen Dreiser, and clippings about Dreiser. A folder-by-folder inventory is provided.

Esther McCoy Papers. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. <<http://artarchives.si.edu/findaids/mccoesth/mccoesth.htm>>. Collection includes two folders of material related to Dreiser and contains significant correspondence with Dreiser, with his second wife Helen Dreiser, and with Dreiser biographer W. A. Swanberg. The finding aid lists complete contents of the collection.

d. Dreiser Correspondence

The main repository of Dreiser correspondence is the University of Pennsylvania Library; see above. Dreiser correspondence can be also found in the repositories listed below. The amount of correspondence ranges from a single letter in some instances to substantial correspondence to and from Dreiser. Some collections also contain other Dreiser-related materials of biographical interest. In most cases, the web site provides some information about the location and terms of access to the collection and a brief description of contents, including mention of Dreiser. Text of correspondence is not available unless otherwise noted.

Charles F. Adams Collection. Special Collections and Archives, Reed College Library, Portland, OR. <<http://simeon.library.reed.edu/collections/special.html>>. The library's Charles F. Adams Collection (not mentioned at this site) contains letters

of Dreiser. See also "Best Holographic Discovery," *Reed Magazine*, Nov. 2000. <http://web.reed.edu/community/newsandpub/Nov2000/a_quiet_gems_abound/2.html>.

American Publishing History at Princeton. Publishing Archives, John Day Publishing Co. Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ.
<<http://libweb2.princeton.edu/rbsc2/aids/subject/publish.htm>>.

Karle Wilson Baker Papers. East Texas Research Center (ETRC), Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.
<<http://libweb.sfasu.edu/etrc/collect/manuscript/personal/BakerKarle/Bakmain.htm>>.

Poultney Bigelow Papers. New York Public Library, New York, NY.
<<http://www.ulster.net/~rdragon/pbinv.htm>>.

Agnes Boulton Collection of Eugene O'Neill. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
<http://www.eoneill.com/yale/ab_collection/series_i.htm>.

Margaret Bourke-White Papers. Department of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library, Syracuse, NY.
<<http://libwww.syr.edu/digital/guides/m/MargaretBourkeWhitePapers-Inv.htm>>.

"Briefings." *The University Record* (University of Michigan), 23 Sept. 1998. <http://www.umich.edu/~urecord/9899/Sep23_98/brief.htm>. Article notes existence of Clarence Darrow Family Archive, on loan to Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI. The collection includes correspondence from Dreiser.

James Branch Cabell Papers. Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA. <<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/vcu-cab/vivadoc.pl?file=vircu00065.xml>>.

Stuart Chase Papers. American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
<<http://memory.loc.gov>>. The papers include correspondence between Dreiser and economist Stuart Chase occasioned by Chase's critical review of Dreiser's *Tragic America*. Includes page images. (Follow "Collection Finder" link to "Business and Economics" to "Coolidge Era ~ Multiformat ~ 1924-1929" to "Guide to People, Organizations, and Topics in Prosperity and Thrift.")

Nancy Cunard Collection. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

<<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/cunard.n.subject.html>>.

William R. Davey Papers, 1894–1963. Syracuse University Library Archives, Syracuse, NY. <<http://www-distance.syr.edu/wrd.html>>.

Includes correspondence with Dreiser and Helen Richardson Dreiser. William R. Davey was Professor of Classics at Syracuse University.

Floyd Dell Papers. Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL.

<<http://www.newberry.org/nl/collections/Dell2.html>>.

Deshon Mss. Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

<<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/lilly/mss/html/deshon.html>>. Includes correspondence of the actress Florence Deshon (1894–1922) with Dreiser.

Madeleine Zabriskie Doty Papers. Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA. <<http://fivecolleges.edu/h-guide/Fnlsoph.htm>>.

Theodore Dreiser Collection. Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

<<http://library.tamu.edu/cushing/collectn/lit/manuscripts/TheodoreDreiser.html>>. Contains five letters to various correspondents.

Eastman Mss. Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

<<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/lilly/mss/html/eastman.html>>. Includes correspondence of Max Forrester Eastman (1883–1969) with Dreiser.

Max Ehrmann Papers. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle, IN.

<http://www.depauw.edu/library/archives/inventories/ehrmann_max%20.htm>. Collection includes correspondence with Theodore Dreiser and his brother Paul Dresser.

Burton Emmett Papers. Southern Historical Collection, Manuscript Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

<<http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/e/Emmett,Burton.html>>.

Morris Ernst Papers. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. <<http://www.law.utexas.edu/rare/hrc.htm>>.

Selected Papers of Wilson Farrand. Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ. <<http://libserv3.princeton.edu/rbsc2/aids/msslist/mainindex.htm>>.

Ford Madox Ford Collection. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY. <<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM04605.html>>.

Correspondence, Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser. Pluckerbooks.

<<http://dave.pluckerbooks.com:81/works/fortc/dreiser/>>. This site offers stripped-down HTML versions of popular public domain literary works, suitable for viewing on handheld computing devices. Includes text of 23 Fort letters to Dreiser. (See also below under 4.b: E-Texts, Other.)

The Correspondence of Charles Hoy Fort. The Fortean Web Site of Mr. X.

<<http://www.resologist.net/corres00.htm>>. Contains links to the texts of several letters from Fort to Dreiser.

Alice Gerstenberg Papers. Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Midwest Manuscript Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL. <<http://www.newberry.org/nl/collections/Gertenberg.html>>.

Emma Goldman Papers. Berkeley Digital Library, SunSITE.

<<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Guide/correspondencecg.html>>. Correspondence on microfilm.

Emma Goldman Papers. International Institute of Social History, Berkeley, CA. <<http://www.iisg.nl/archives/gias/g/10749603.html>>.

Douglas Goldring Fonds. Special Collections, University of Victoria Libraries, Victoria, BC, Canada.

<<http://gateway1.uvic.ca/spcoll/Lit/Eng/Goldring.html>>.

Albert H. Gross, 1924–1946. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

<<http://www.lib.umd.edu/ARCV/litmss/onepagers/gross.html>>. Albert H. (Pete) Gross (1895–1948) worked in publishing for more than two decades with firms including Boni & Liveright. The collection includes correspondence from Dreiser.

Flora May Holly Papers. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

<<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/holly.html>>. Correspondence and papers of Flora May Holly (1868–1960), a literary agent who represented many prominent authors, including Dreiser.

Spud Johnson Collection. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

<<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/spud.corr.html>>.

Grant C. Knight Papers. Division of Special Collections and Archives, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, KY.

<http://digilib.uky.edu/dynaweb/oak/kukead/kukmead/gsmans/@Generic__BookTextView/2834>.

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Records, 1873–1996. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

<<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/aakhist.html>>.

Letters to James Korges, 1926–1975. Fondren Library, Woodson Research Center, Rice University, Houston, TX.

<<http://www.rice.edu/fondren/woodson/mss/ms16.html>>.

Ring Lardner Papers. Midwest Manuscript Collection, Roger and Julie Baskes Department of Special Collections, Newberry Library, Chicago, IL. <<http://www.newberry.org/nl/collections/Lardner.html>>.

Letters and Documents Collection. Special Collections Department, Bryn Mawr College Library, Bryn Mawr, PA.

<<http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/SpecColl/Guides/letterboxD.html>>.

George Horace Lorimer Papers. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. <<http://www.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/1600.htm>>.

Manuscripts Collection/Literature. Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections, William S. Carlson Library, The University of Toledo, Toledo, OH. <<http://www.cl.utoledo.edu/canaday/mssguide/lit.html>>.

Dora Marsden Collection. Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ.

<<http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbcs/aids/marsden.html>>.

George N. Meissner Collection. Washington University Libraries, St. Louis, MO. <<http://library.wustl.edu/units/spec/manuscripts/meissner.html>>.

The New Yorker Records, c.1924–1984. Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

<<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/NYhtml/appendixa.html>>. Collection includes correspondence of William C. Lengel with Dreiser.

Fulton Oursler Sr. Papers. Special Collections Division, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

<<http://www.library.georgetown.edu/dept/speccoll/clt4.htm>>.

W. Hugh Peal Manuscripts Collection. Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, KY.

<<http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/Special/peal/>>. Contains letters of Dreiser from his days at *Smith's Magazine*. See also "Catalog of an Exhibition from the W. Hugh Peal Collection," Special Collections and Archives, University of Kentucky Libraries. <<http://digilib.kyvl.org/dynaweb/oak/kukead/kukmead/whpeal>>.

G. Harry Pouder Collection. Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD. <<http://www.mdhs.org/library/Mss/ms001888.html>>.

William Marion Reedy Mss Survey. Yale Collection of American Literature,

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT. <<http://webtext.library.yale.edu/beinflat/surveys.reedy.htm>>. A survey of materials in the Yale Collection of American Literature. Includes correspondence with Dreiser.

Margaret Sanger Papers, Microfilm Edition. Sponsored by New York University in association with the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College. <http://www.lexisnexis.com/academic/guides/womens_studies/margaret_sanger/sanger1.htm>. Microfilm edition of the Margaret Sanger Papers. Web page provides microfilm reel descriptions. Correspondents include Dreiser.

Upton Sinclair Collection. The John Rylands University Library, Manchester, UK. <<http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/data2/spcoll/upton/>>.

Gloria Swanson Papers. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. <<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/swanson.index.html>>.

Watkins Loomis, Inc. Records, 1883–1987. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY. <<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/rare/guides/WatkinsLoomis/index.html>>. Ann Watkins (1885–1967) was a literary agent and knew Dreiser during the early 1910s. Contains correspondence with Dreiser.

Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~stwright/WrBr/wright_papers/WP_general.html>.

e. Miscellaneous and Unclassified Material

American Newspaper Repository, Rollinsford, NH. <<http://home.gwi.net/~dnb/newsrep.html>>. The American Newspaper Repository is a nonprofit corporation founded by Nicholson Baker, a writer. The repository has original issues of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and *Pittsburgh Dispatch* during the years Dreiser worked there. “Theodore Dreiser wrote a column called ‘Heard in the Corridors’ for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. There are pages missing from the microfilm that contain Dreiser’s column; we have them.”

Hugh Atkinson, Collector. Theodore Dreiser Collection. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, Urbana, IL. <<http://gateway.library.uiuc.edu/collections/collections>>.

htm#Collections>. “Hugh Atkinson was University Librarian for ten years. His extensive collection includes at least 223 first and later editions of Dreiser’s novels and other works. Among the most notable items in the collection is one of only twelve copies of the original text for *Tragic America*.” See “Major-Golden Guide to Specialized Collections” link.

Chapin Library Collections. Williams College, Williamstown, MA.
<<http://www.williams.edu/resources/chapin/collect/collect.html#Amlit>>. Collection contains some unspecified Dreiser material.

Helen Baker Cushman Business Papers. Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE.
<<http://www.hagley.lib.de.us/2175.htm>>. Helen Baker Cushman operated a business history consulting firm. Her extensive files on the Butterick Company include company histories and a file on Dreiser’s years as a Butterick editor.

Donald Sergey Friede Papers. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
<<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/friede.html>>. Donald Sergey Friede (1901–1965), publisher and literary agent, represented several well-known authors, including Dreiser.

George McCrossen Papers. University of New Mexico, General Center for Southwest Research, Albuquerque, NM.
<<http://elibrary.unm.edu/oanm/NmU/nmu1%23mss356bc/>>. Contains minor Dreiser-related materials which appear to be in the form of a newspaper clipping and a telegram addressed to Dreiser.

Mary Fanton Roberts Papers. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.
<<http://artarchives.si.edu/exhibits/piano/roberts.htm>>. Literary and musical files of New York writer, editor, and critic Mary Fanton Roberts (1871–1956). Includes unspecified material related to Theodore and Helen Dreiser.

Street and Smith’s Preservation and Access Project. Syracuse University Library, Syracuse, NY.
<<http://libwww.syr.edu/digital/guides/s/StreetAndSmith/>>. While not devoted to Dreiser, this web site would be of interest to anyone interested in the dime novel publishing world and dime novel publisher Street and Smith, where Dreiser was employed as an editor.

Department of Special Collections, UCLA Library, Los Angeles, CA.
<<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/scweb/lit.htm>>. Contains

“books and papers” of writers including Dreiser. No details provided.

University of Chicago Presidents’ Papers 1889–1925. University of Chicago Archives, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL.

<<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/findaid/presidentspapers/1889-1925/>>. Contains some unspecified material relating to Dreiser.

f. Dreiser Correspondence and Other Material Offered for Sale

Postings by private dealers and auction houses on the Internet occasionally provide details and/or texts or facsimiles of Dreiser letters. **Note:** because these items are offered for sale, they may disappear from the web.

Gemini Fine Books & Arts, Ltd., Hinsdale, IL.

<<http://www.geminibooks.com/FEPage2.html>>. Theodore Dreiser autograph letter. (Look under “First Editions” link.)

Kaller Historical Documents, Inc., Marlboro, NJ.

<<http://www.americagallery.com/cgi-bin/catalog.cgi?category=thearts>>. Theodore Dreiser autograph letter. Text provided.

Visible Ink Incorporated, Roslyn Heights, NY.

<http://www.visink.com/detail.asp?Cat_ID=187&Prod_ID=239>. Theodore Dreiser autograph letter. Site contains facsimile.

John Wilson Manuscripts Limited, Cheltenham, UK.

<<http://manuscripts.co.uk/index.htm>>. Theodore Dreiser autograph letter.

John Wilson Manuscripts Limited, Cheltenham, UK.

<<http://www.manuscripts.co.uk/stock/2229.htm>>. William John Locke (1863–1930), novelist; collection of 30 autograph letters, one of which concerns Dreiser.

3. Bibliographies

The main sources of Dreiser-related bibliographic material on the Internet are the web sites of the International Theodore Dreiser Society and the University of Pennsylvania Library’s DreiserWebSource. A web version of the standard Dreiser bibliography, *Theodore Dreiser: A Primary Bibliography and Reference Guide*, ed. Donald Pizer, Richard W. Dowell, and Frederic E. Rusch, is at present being posted at the University of Pennsylvania Library’s DreiserWebSource, with plans to update it at regular intervals. A limited

amount of bibliographic material can also be found at the following sites.

AuthorSheets. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

<<http://www.clpgh.org/locations/humanities/authorsheets/dreiser.html>>

Provides a useful bibliography of critical works (that might otherwise be overlooked) in which Dreiser is discussed but is not the main subject.

The FictionMags Index.

<<http://users.ev1.net/~homeville/fictionmag/0start.htm>>. Provides publication information related to the first appearance of Dreiser's fiction in magazines.

Reuben, Paul P. "Chapter 6: Late Nineteenth Century—Theodore Dreiser."

PAL: Perspectives in American Literature—A Research and Reference Guide.

<<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap6/dreiser.html>>. A selected bibliography of works by and about Dreiser. Also includes a brief assessment of Dreiser's work.

Online catalogues of major research libraries such as the New York Public Library <<http://catnyp.nypl.org/>> also provide a means to assemble or check book publication details.

The web also offers a convenient means to buy out-of-print books by and about Dreiser using sites such as addall.com, alibiris.com, abebooks.com, half.com, and powells.com.

4. E-Texts

a. Dreiser's Works

[For e-text editions of the 1900 and 1981 editions of *Sister Carrie*, see 1. Web Sites Dedicated to Dreiser: DreiserWebSource.]

"The Church and Wealth In America" (Chapter 14 of *Tragic America*). *The Secular Web Library*.

<http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/theodore_dreiser/church_and_wealth_in_america.html>.

The Financier. Project Gutenberg, 1999. Etext #1840.

<<http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/cgi-bin/sdb/t9.cgi>>. While not specifically identified, the site provides e-text of the later, 1927 edition published by Boni & Liveright.

"Ida Hauchawout" (from *A Gallery of Women*, vol. II). *Electronic Text Center*, University of Virginia Library.

<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/DreIdah.html>>.

"The Mighty Burke." *Electronic Text Center*, University of Virginia Library. <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/DreMigh.html>>.

Sister Carrie. *Project Gutenberg*, 1995. Etext #233.

<<http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/cgi-bin/sdb/t9.cgi>>. While not specifically identified, the site provides e-text of the first, 1900 edition published by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

Sister Carrie. *University of Virginia Hypertext Project*.

<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DREISER/carrie.html>>. While not specifically identified, the site provides e-text of the first, 1900 edition published by Doubleday, Page, & Co.

The Titan. *Project Gutenberg*, 2003. Etext #3629.

<<http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/cgi-bin/sdb/t9.cgi>>.

b. Other

Fort, Charles. *The Book of the Damned*. (New York: Horace Liveright, 1919). <<http://www.sacred-texts.com/fort/damned/>>.

Pluckerbooks.

<<http://dave.pluckerbooks.com:81/>>. This website offers stripped-down HTML versions of popular public domain literary works, suitable for viewing on handheld computing devices. Includes 20 works by Charles Fort as well as text of 23 Fort letters to Dreiser. (See also above, 2.d: Correspondence, Other.)

Spencer, Herbert. *First Principles* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1862). Archive for the History of Economic Thought, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

<<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/spencer/>>.

c. Subscription Materials

E-texts of books by and about Dreiser and related criticism can be obtained on line by paying a subscription fee from Questia Media America, Inc. at <<http://www.questia.com/>>. A sampling of titles available includes the following Dreiser works: *Sister Carrie*, *The Financier*, *Newspaper Days* (edited by T. D. Nostwich), *Twelve Men*, *Living Philosophies* (Simon and Schuster, 1931), and *The Living Thoughts of Thoreau* (Longmans, Green, 1939).

Critical works available on Dreiser include Burton Rascoe, *Theodore*

Dreiser; Charles Shapiro, *Theodore Dreiser: Our Bitter Patriot*; Dorothy Dudley, *Forgotten Frontiers: Dreiser and the Land of the Free*; Robert H. Elias, *Theodore Dreiser: Apostle of Nature*; and Louis J. Zanine, *Mechanism and Mysticism: The Influence of Science on the Thought and Work of Theodore Dreiser*. Also included are, among others, Donald Pizer, *Documents of American Realism and Naturalism*; Pizer, *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*; Kenneth S. Lynn, *The Dream of Success: A Study of the Modern American Imagination*; Max Putzel, *The Man in the Mirror: William Marion Reedy and His Magazine*; Paul S. Boyer, *Purity in Print: The Vice-Society Movement and Book Censorship in America*; Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*; Stuart P. Sherman, *On Contemporary Literature*; and Charles Child Walcott, *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided Stream*.

5. Sites Devoted to Individuals Connected with Dreiser

Henderson, Clayton W. "The Slippery Slopes of Fame: Paul Dresser and the Centennial of 'On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away.'" *Indiana Historical Society*, Indianapolis, IN.

<<http://www.indianahistory.org/pub/traces/henders.html>>.

"Paul Dresser—An American Composer." Vigo County Historical Society, Terre Haute, IN. <<http://www.indstate.edu/community/vchs/dresser.htm>>.

Charles Fort Institute. <<http://www.fortean.org/aboutfort/fortbiog.html>>.

Murder in the Adirondacks.

<<http://www.albany.edu/~brandon/gillette.html>>. This informative and well-designed site was developed by Keene State College professor Craig Brandon, author of *Murder in the Adirondacks* (1986). The site provides a wealth of detail about the 1906 murder case that provided the basis for Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. It discusses parallels between the case and the book and also focuses on the film based on the book, *A Place in the Sun*.

"'On the Banks of the Wabash' is the official state song of Indiana."

<<http://www.roadescape.com/INsong.html>>. Contains details about the song's composition and a link to the music.

"Charles Tyson Yerkes (1837–1905)." *Chicago "L".org*, Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago, IL. <<http://www.chicago-l.org/figures/yerkes/>>.

"Charles Tyson Yerkes (1837–1905), Financier." National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

<<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brush/yerkes.htm>>. Downloadable portrait

and brief bio of Charles T. Yerkes, on whom the protagonist Cowperwood in Dreiser's *Trilogy of Desire* is based. The portrait, dated circa 1893, is by Jan Van Beers and is in the National Portrait Gallery.

"Electrifying London: The Yerkes Era." Suburban Electric Railway Association, London, UK.

<<http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~gsgleaves/london3.htm>>.

Franch, John. "Charles Tyson Yerkes 1837–1905." *University of Chicago Alumni Magazine*, Feb. 1997. *Yerkes Observatory Virtual Museum*.

<<http://astro.uchicago.edu/yerkes/virtualmuseum/Yerkesnewarticle.html>>.

Vandervoort, Bill. "Charles Tyson Yerkes." *Chicago Transit Past & Present*. <<http://members.aol.com/chictafan/companys.html>>.

6. Author Sites Connected with Dreiser or Literary Naturalism

The Sherwood Anderson Collection. Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. <<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/anderson/intro.htm>>.

Stephen Crane Society.

<<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/crane/index.html>>.

Fast, Howard. "The Current Scene: Petty Villainy." *The Daily Worker* 21 May 1956. <<http://www.trussel.com/hf/petty.htm>>. Discusses how Fast was summarily and unfairly removed as editor of *The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser* in 1956 due to what was seen as the "taint" of Fast's communism.

Harold Frederic.

<<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/howells/frederic.htm>>.

Hamlin Garland Society.

<<http://www.uncw.edu/garland/>>.

William Dean Howells Society.

<<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/howells/index.html>>.

Sinclair Lewis Society.

<<http://lilt.ilstu.edu/separry/lewis.html>>.

"Edgar Lee Masters (1869–1950)." *Modern American Poetry: An Online Journal and Multimedia Companion to Anthology of Modern American Poetry* (Oxford University Press 2000), ed. Cary Nelson.

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/m_r/masters/masters.htm>.

Mencken Society.

<<http://www.mencken.org/>>.

Frank Norris.

<<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/howells/norris.htm>>.

eO'Neill.com: An Electronic Eugene O'Neill Archive.

<<http://www.eoneill.com/>>.

David Graham Phillips (1867–1911).

<<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/phillips.htm>>.

Powys Society.

<<http://home.iae.nl/users/tklijn/pws/powys soc.htm>>.

The H.G. Wells Society.

<<http://www.hgwellsusa.50megs.com/index.html>>.

7. Scholarly Papers

[See also articles listed above, 1. Web Sites Dedicated to Dreiser: Dreiser-WebSource.]

Bourne, Randolph. "The Art of Theodore Dreiser." *Electronic Text Center*, University of Virginia Library.

<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BouArto.html>>. While not so identified, the article first appeared in Randolph Bourne, *History of a Literary Radical* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1920) and was reprinted in Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro, eds., *The Stature of Theodore Dreiser: A Critical Survey of the Man and His Work* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955).

Brinkley, Douglas. "Chant of Middle America: Theodore Dreiser, *A Hoosier Holiday*, and the Birth of the Road Book." Indiana Historical Society.

<<http://www.indianahistory.org/pub/traces/hholiday.html>>. Contains Brinkley's introduction to the Indiana University Press edition of *A Hoosier Holiday*.

Fast, Howard, "Dreiser's Short Stories." *Trussel's ElectiCity*. Howard Fast texts online.

<<http://www.trussel.com/hf/plots/t499.htm>>. Originally published in *New Masses* 60 (3 Sept. 1946): 11–12. A slightly shorter version of this article appears as Fast's introduction to *The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser* (Cleveland: World, 1947; reprinted 1989 by Ivan R. Dee).

Griffin, Joseph. "Howard Fast, James T. Farrell, and *The Best Short Stories of Theodore Dreiser*." *International Fiction Review* 14 (1987): 79–83.

<<http://www.trussel.com/hf/dreiser.htm>>.

Oldani, Louis J. "Dreiser's 'Genius' in the Making: Composition and Revi-

sion." *Studies in Bibliography* (electronic journal) 47 (1994): 230–52.
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

Pitofsky, Alex. "Dreiser's *The Financier* and the Horatio Alger Myth." *Twentieth Century Literature* 44 (1998): 276–90. <http://zeal.com/exit.jhtml?cid=535158&wid=60361807&so=&xr=/category/preview.jhtml%3Fcid%3D535158>.

Stenerson, Douglas C. "Some Impressions of the Buddha: Dreiser and Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 3 (1991): 387–405.
<http://sino-sv3.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/FULLTEXT/JR-ADM/steneo.htm>.

Sterne, Richard C. "Dreiser's Sense of 'Injustice' in *An American Tragedy*." *Legal Studies Forum* 16 (1992): 333–51.
<http://www.law.utexas.edu/lpop/etext/lsf/sterne16.htm>.

Trilling, Lionel. "Reality in America." *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Viking, 1950), 3–22. American Studies at the University of Virginia.
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/trilling.html>.

West, James L. W. III. "Dreiser and the B. W. Dodge *Sister Carrie*." *Studies in Bibliography* (electronic journal) 35 (1982): 323–331.
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>.

8. Study Guides/Teaching Aids

Campbell, Donna M. "American Literature Sites."
<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl310/sites.htm>. This page provides helpful links to various American literature sites.

———. "Naturalism in American Literature." *Literary Movements*.
<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl413/natural.htm>.

———. "Selected Short Bibliography on American Literary Naturalism."
<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl413/natbib.htm>.

———. "Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945)."
<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/engl462/Dreiser.htm>. Contains annotated links to biographies, bibliographies, electronic texts, and related information.

"C-SPAN American Writers: Theodore Dreiser."
<http://www.americanwriters.org/writers/Dreiser.asp>. Contains video clips of Dreiser program from C-SPAN American Writers series, originally broadcast in 2001.

Hutchisson, James M., and James L. W. West III. "Theodore Dreiser

(1871–1945).”

<http://college.hmco.com/english/lauder/heath/4e/students/author_pages/modern/dreiser_th.html>. Textbook site for *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 4th edition. Provides an introduction to Dreiser and the circumstances under which his short story “Typhoon” was written.

———. “Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945).” *Heath Anthology of American Literature Online Instructor’s Guide*.

<<http://college.hmco.com/english/heath/syllabuild/iguide/dreiser.html>>. Provides classroom issues and strategies for teaching Dreiser’s short story “Typhoon,” which was published in its original form (as Dreiser intended it) in *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 4th edition.

Liukkonen, Petri. “Theodore Dreiser 1871–1945.”

<<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/dreiser.htm>>. Brief introduction to Dreiser’s life and impact as a writer. Includes suggestions for further reading.

“Naturalism.”

<<http://www.unc.edu/courses/eng81br1/natur.html>>. A brief discussion of naturalism in Crane, Norris, and Dreiser.

Smydra, David. “Theodore Dreiser: Selected Criticism.”

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/enam854_01/dreiser.html>.

“Theodore Dreiser.” Indiana Historical Society.

<<http://www.indianahistory.org/heritage/dreiser.html>>. A biographical sketch of Dreiser.

“Theodore Dreiser.” *Spartacus Educational*.

<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Jdreiser.htm>>. A brief summary of Dreiser’s life and career with helpful links to information about individuals and events in Dreiser’s life.

9. Encyclopedias

Davies, Jude. “An American Tragedy (1925).” *The Literary Encyclopedia*

<<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=6703>>.

———. “Dreiser, Theodore (1871-1945).” *The Literary Encyclopedia*

<<http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=1316>>.

———. “Naturalism, 1893-1914.” *The Literary Encyclopedia*

<<http://www.litencyc.com/php/stpics.php?rec=true&UID=764>>.

———. “*Sister Carrie* (1900).” *The Literary Encyclopedia*

<<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=2044>>.

“Dreiser, Theodore.” *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2001.

<<http://www.bartleby.com/65/dr/Dreiser.html>>.

"Dreiser, Theodore Herman Albert." *Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia*, 2003.

<<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761553856>>.

Smith, Kyle. "Theodore Dreiser." *St. James Encyclopedia of Pop Culture*, 2002. Gale Group.

<<http://www.findarticles.com/g1epc/bio/2419200337/p1/article.jhtml>>.

10. Films and Plays

The following sites provide information about the dates, production credits, casts, etc., of dramatic and film adaptations of Dreiser's works.

"*American Tragedy, An* (1931)." *The Internet Movie Database*.

<<http://us.imdb.com/Title?0021607>>.

"Full Record: *Carrie* (Wyler/Olivier)." University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Media Resources Center.

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/films/full.php?film_id=932>.

"Full Record: *A Place in the Sun*." University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Media Resources Center.

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/films/full.php?film_id=3861>.

Jacobson, Colin. Review of *A Place in the Sun*. *DVD Movie Guide*.

<<http://dvdmg.com/placeinthesun.shtml>>.

Review of *My Gal Sal*. *TV Guide Online*.

<<http://www.tvguide.com/Movies/database/ShowMovie.asp?MI=7968>>.

Contains cast and production credits.

"Shelley Winters: *A Place in the Sun*." *Turner Classic Movies*.

<<http://www.turnerclassicmovies.com/ThisMonth/Article/0,,12480,00.html>>. Includes link to trailer for film.

"Theodore Dreiser." *AMC Guide*.

<<http://www.amctv.com/person/detail/0,,1217-1-EST,00.html>>. Provides links to information about *The Prince Who Was a Thief* (based on a story by Dreiser), *A Place in the Sun*, *My Gal Sal*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, and *An American Tragedy*.

"Theodore Dreiser." *Internet Broadway Database*.

<<http://www.ibdb.com/person.asp?ID=8839>>. Provides details about productions of the following plays: *Case of Clyde Griffiths*, *An American Tragedy* (original, 1926; revival, 1931), *The Hand of the Potter*, *The Girl in the Coffin*.

11. Miscellaneous

a. Dreiser Images

Google Image Search. <<http://images.google.com/>>. A search on “Theodore Dreiser” provides downloadable JPG images of Dreiser photos and book covers.

b. Genealogy

Dresser, Jim. “John Paul Dreiser Sr.” (Family page containing Dresser family tree in GEDCOMfile format).

<<http://www.my-ged.com/db/page/dresser2/2098>>. Genealogical information related to the family of Dreiser’s parents, John Paul and Sarah (Schänäb) Dreiser. The author collects and maintains genealogical information on Dresser families worldwide.

c. Sites with Biographical Details

“Dreiser Indicted By Kentucky Jury.” *New York Times*, 11 Nov. 1931. *KY-COALMINERS-L Archives*.

<<http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/KY-COALMINERS/2002-06/1024843070>>. Full-text posting of the *New York Times* news item about Dreiser’s arrest for “misconduct” with Marie Pergain during the Kentucky Miners’ strike.

O’Brien, John. “An Interview with William Eastlake,” 1978. *Center for Book Culture.org*.

<http://www.centerforbookculture.org/interviews/interview_eastlake.html>. The interview contains a snippet of Dreiser’s conversation as recounted by William Eastlake, the interviewee.

12. Misrepresentation and Misappropriation of Dreiser on the Web

The web, of course, can be a good place for propagating misinformation, and Dreiser is no exception. Many sites make erroneous or misleading statements about Dreiser. A common misconception, for example, that has been propagated on the Internet is that *Sister Carrie* “rocked the literary world”—that it caused controversy upon publication, leading to a “public outcry” along with charges of obscenity, making Dreiser a *cause célèbre* for the artistic community. This seems to be the result of a tendency to confuse the details of *Sister Carrie*’s publication with the controversy surrounding

The "Genius." Another common misconception is that *A Place in the Sun* represents the only and the authentic film version of *An American Tragedy*, an accurate and detailed adaptation of the book. Clyde Griffiths is described for the benefit of the putative reader of *An American Tragedy* as a member of the underclass who was raised in a slum, and Roberta Alden is a "slattern" who almost deserved to be murdered considering that Sondra Finchley (whose limitations and personality defects are overlooked) is unquestionably more worthy of Clyde's affections.

The web abounds in annoying factual errors, too. *Ev'ry Month* is described as a "literary magazine." Dreiser is said to have been plagued by a stuttering problem in his youth; to have developed a vocation as a reporter while attending college; to have been employed as a "dramatic editor" and "traveling correspondent" for the *St Louis Globe-Democrat*; and to have left college in a huff because he "despised the pomp of academia" and saw through it all. Another oversimplification that obscures the facts is that Dreiser went into a state of depression immediately after his struggles with publisher Doubleday, Page, & Co. over the publication of *Sister Carrie*, and that this was the immediate and prime cause of the period of near suicidal despair described in *An Amateur Laborer*. One site presents as established fact the apocryphal story that the outrage of "one of the wives of the men at the publishing house" (Mrs. Neltje Doubleday) at what she perceived to be the book's immorality led to a confrontation between Dreiser and the firm of Doubleday, Page over the publication of *Sister Carrie*.

Another development which should be noted for the record is that quotations of Dreiser and synopses of his views appear on websites whose content is either overtly racist or anti-religious and therefore controversial. Instances of such web content are noted below:

- Anti-religious statements. It is perhaps not surprising that Dreiser's anti-religious remarks have been quoted in support of an atheist agenda, although he never proclaimed himself an atheist (see Gordon Stein, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief*, 2 vols. [Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1985], vol. 1: 12, a printed work). Anti-religious remarks attributed to Dreiser (lifted from sources such as a Carole Gray desktop calendar, *The New York Public Library Book of Twentieth-Century American Quotations*, and George Seldes, ed., *The Great Quotations*) are posted at the web site of an atheist group, Positive Atheism, at <<http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/quotes/quote-d1.htm>>.
- Anti-Semitic quotations and views. Anti-Semitic quotations from Dreiser (along with other writers such as George Sand, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, Hamlin Garland, Richard Harding Davis, H. G. Wells, D. H. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw, H. L.

Mencken, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe and a host of other figures ranging from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to Henry Ford and Adolf Hitler) are posted on web sites of hate groups with an Anti-Semitic, Aryan supremacist, and racist agenda. The Dreiser quotes are taken from a 1922 letter to H. L. Mencken and a 1935 letter to Hutchins Hapgood printed in the *Nation*. (See Robert H. Elias, ed., *Letters of Theodore Dreiser: A Selection*, vol. 2: 405, 650–52). Self-styled Anti-Zionist sites also make the following claims, which are repeated verbatim at the two such sites that were accessed, namely, Anti-Zion-General Commentary Part. <<http://www.thirdworldplanet.com/jubel/general-1.html>> and “Books Online: AntiZion.” *Historical Review Press*. <<http://www.ety.com/HRP/booksonline/antizion/D.htm>>:

An early Dreiser work, *The Hand of the Potter*, describes the sex-slaying of a little girl by a young Jew. A Shylock-like Jewish landlord is shown trying to collect rent from the grief-stricken father when the girl’s body is discovered in the Jew’s house. Dreiser’s private correspondence is peppered with the word “kyke” (his spelling). After the rise of National Socialism in Germany, he was encouraged to call for public debate on the Jewish question, and as part of this, the magazine he edited published an anti-Jewish “Symposium” (*American Spectator*, September, 1933). Dreiser was under heavy pressure to disavow his anti-Jewish sentiments, and Jewish apologists usually claim that he did, although it is often overlooked that the supposed conversion occurred when the then-elderly and ailing author had become ensnarled with the Communist Party.

The vitriolic and unabashedly racist content of these sites (which abound in distortions and misstatements of fact) does not deserve further comment. An excellent and comprehensive introduction to the controversy over Dreiser and anti-Semitism can be found in Richard Tuerk, “*The American Spectator* Symposium Controversy: Was Dreiser Anti-Semitic?” *Prospects* 16 (1991): 367–89, a printed work.

For additional comments and evaluation of web-propagated misinformation about Dreiser, see the online continuation of this discussion posted at the Dreiser Society web site, <<http://www.uncw.edu/dreiser/>>.

Reviews

Theodore Dreiser, by Donald Pizer. Gale Study Guides to Great Literature: Literary Masters vol. 7. Detroit: Gale Group, 2000. 155 pp. Cloth, \$55.00.

Donald Pizer's purpose in this volume is to provide a brief overview of Dreiser's life, his work, and his relationship to the era in which he wrote. Pizer also offers his own perceptions of Dreiser's novels for undergraduates, graduate students, and English instructors unfamiliar with Dreiser but hoping to expand their reading list for the classroom. Pizer's well-known, extensive scholarship in Dreiser studies serves him well, for he fulfills these goals effectively and thoroughly. In fact, this study guide will better cultivate a student's perceptions of Dreiser than similar but far less comprehensive resources such as Cliff's Notes.

In the first chapter, "About Theodore Dreiser," Pizer highlights important biographical details about Dreiser, discussing his childhood in Indiana, his newspaper days, his stint as an editor, his years as a novelist, and his role as a social activist in the 1930s. Selecting events most worth noting is a difficult task in itself for something as brief as a study guide, so Pizer chooses only those moments and people in Dreiser's life that best explain the development of his deterministic philosophy and that affected, if not provided him with, the material for many of his novels, namely *Sister Carrie*, *Jennie Gerhardt*, *The "Genius,"* and *The Bulwark*. One point in particular, that Dreiser's poverty as a youth led to his sympathy for characters who "lack the means to satisfy their desire for things that might seem trivial and even tawdry to others but to them constitute happiness and even beauty" (12), goes far to explain for students the selfish motivations of characters such as Caroline Meeber, George Hurstwood, and Clyde Griffiths.

Pizer's summary of Dreiser's philosophical beliefs and his application of them to his novels are major strengths of this work. Though Pizer aptly explains the influence of the French novelist Balzac, especially the idea of fate

determining the individual's success or failure in a metropolis, and Spencer's social Darwinism, he might have gone more thoroughly into how Dreiser's years as a newspaper reporter in Chicago and St. Louis had already brought him to many of the same philosophical conclusions these writers advanced. Balzac, Spencer, and T. H. Huxley simply confirmed his pessimism. Pizer also devotes a fair amount of space to explaining the genesis and publishing history of Dreiser's novels but, with the exception of *The "Genius,"* never clarifies what in his other novels, particularly *The Financier*, attracted or repulsed the reading public (not simply critics). More attention to the public's reception of Dreiser's novels might have better illuminated for students the effect of Progressive moralists on Dreiser's career and on his clash with publishers. In addition, the importance of H. L. Mencken to Dreiser's career and development as a novelist is well known and noted in the book, but why their relationship fell apart is never fully explained. Pizer closes the first chapter with an excellent summary of Dreiser's mechanistic view of the universe and his belief that the "complexity, order, and symmetry in physical life constitute both a kind of meaning and beauty" (29); he then illustrates how this belief works in *The Bulwark*—an analysis taken in part from one of Pizer's earlier studies, *The Novels of Theodore Dreiser*.

Chapter Two, "Dreiser at Work," discusses Dreiser's rocky relationship with publishers and his propensity to allow those close to him to edit his novels freely, especially for grammar and style. Moreover, as Pizer notes, characterization, plotting, description, and major themes were often a "collaborative production" (46). Using *Sister Carrie* as the chief example, he takes his readers through the typical editorial method Dreiser followed, explaining that Dreiser often became obsessed with cutting and altering as a means, either consciously or unconsciously, of making the book salable. Despite the critical controversy over whether the holographs or the early typescripts of Dreiser's novels are closer to his final intention than the published text, Pizer, in his most important point in this chapter, argues convincingly that the reader should treat the prepublication versions of Dreiser's novels and the published texts as separate forms that together play a role in understanding his work fully (43). Nevertheless, considering the space Pizer devotes to Dreiser's editorial practice and the disagreements scholars have on this issue, a closer examination of the controversy surrounding the 1927 revised edition of *The Financier* would have been helpful.

In the third chapter, "Dreiser's Era," Pizer argues that Dreiser offers readers a unique view of his era since he saw America not as "Anglo-

Saxon, protestant, and middle class but rather immigrant, Catholic, and impoverished" (50). Pizer effectively shows how Dreiser's views of the American city and its complex social realities permeate his novels; in fact, he includes in the margins relevant excerpts from autobiographical works such as *Dawn* and *A Book About Myself*, as well as philosophical works like *Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub*, to reinforce these connections. Two points in particular are conveyed through an analysis of *The Financier*, *Sister Carrie*, and *American Tragedy*: (1) that Dreiser sets his characters against the social context of the time to show that they are mere products of the social system in which they live, and (2) that he detested the hypocrisy of those successful individuals who often imposed a moral authority on the economically disadvantaged. These points, along with Pizer's explanation of Dreiser's mistrust of a blind, dogmatic belief in religion, his scientific and mechanistic perception of life, and his Darwinian-based skepticism, elucidate Dreiser's pessimism about the American dream of success.

In the fourth chapter, "Dreiser's Works," Pizer provides readers with helpful plot summaries of Dreiser's novels and an overview of his philosophical works, followed by a general but fair history of Dreiser criticism, from the New Critics, who found Dreiser's work crude in diction and awkward in its use of literary devices, to Robert Penn Warren, who admired Dreiser's symbolic constructs, to the cultural and social criticism of Rachel Bowlby, Amy Kaplan, and Walter Benn Michaels. Such a variety of criticism has convinced Pizer not simply to look at Dreiser in terms of his importance to American naturalism but to accept "the complexities and ambivalence of both the movement and Dreiser" (85). Given his intended audience, Pizer appropriately examines Dreiser's reputation and his current status, noting that present interest falls into two categories: "that which concerns scholars and that which still engages the reader" (92). He points out the success of *Sister Carrie* in the classroom, of *An American Tragedy* with literary critics, and of *The Financier* with those individuals looking to understand American social life in the late 19th century. As a testament to Dreiser's wide cultural appeal, Pizer closes the fourth chapter with a list of stage and motion picture productions and adaptations of his works.

I found Chapter Five, "Dreiser on His Novels," somewhat unorthodox in its presentation. Rather than supplementing his own commentary with quotations from relevant sources to illustrate how Dreiser felt about his novels, Pizer simply provides lengthy excerpts from Dreiser's autobiographies, his many newspaper columns, and his occasional magazine articles to illustrate not only the origins of Dreiser's philosophical views on religion, industrialization, and urbanization, but also how his beliefs came to influence his fic-

tion. Using Dreiser's own words to help the reader gain an understanding of his intent seems like a good idea, but the lack of commentary reinforcing this approach could be troublesome for a reader unfamiliar with those works.

Pizer concludes the book with a brief chapter, "Dreiser as Studied," comparing Dreiser's naturalism with that of his European contemporaries and discussing Dreiser's influence on later American writers such as Richard Wright and James T. Farrell. Though Pizer's analysis is necessarily brief, he does point out that "because naturalism is so deeply rooted in the specific conditions of particular countries, Dreiser as a naturalist is more profitably compared with his contemporaries in the American naturalistic movement than with similar writers in France" (133), especially in regard to urban decline and the fate of the artist in America. He astutely observes that the dramatization of "personal collapse in relation to social decay . . . suggest[s] the permanent residue of Dreiserian naturalism in American fiction" (133).

The volume concludes with insightful study questions, a useful glossary, and a selective secondary bibliography. Students and teachers alike will find this work practical and informative.

—Kevin W. Jett, University of Toledo

Around Quitting Time: Work and Middle-Class Fantasy in American Fiction, by Robert Seguin. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2001. 210 pp. \$49.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

Robert Seguin sets out to explore the imaginary realm that American authors have created in their fiction, a world he labels as "middle-classlessness." Seguin posits that American authors have created a broad and ambiguous construct of the middle class so as to raise the topic of class in American culture and then undercut any discussion of it. He focuses on novels written in the first half of the 20th century by a mix of authors—Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, Cather's *A Lost Lady* and *The Professor's House*, West's *The Day of the Locust*, Barth's *The Floating Opera*, and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. For Seguin, "quitting time" exists outside of the realm of capitalistic production as a time between work and leisure. In that suspended time, people can envision a new world, an imagined utopia full of possibilities, as yet unrealized. In that imagined time, the nature of the characters is located, as it were, among a variety of dichotomies: natural/human-made, public/private, upper/working class, inside/outside.

By creating this “in-between” state, this “middle-classlessness,” American authors manage to erase any other class identification.

Seguin first explores this concept in Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* through three dominant images—the suburb, the rocking chair on the porch, and windows. The suburbs, Seguin explains, are situated between the pastoral and urban, without really being a part of either. The suburb is the liminal utopia: “The suburb has typically been imagined as the negation of urban industrialization, as a pastoral retreat within the confines of urban economic functionality—a greening of the machine. It is also the most exemplary material and spatial correlative to middle-classlessness” (24). The suburb neutralizes the geographical and social spaces between classes. Similarly, the porch serves as a mediating place between the natural and the human-made, between public and private space. In the imagination, characters can step off the porch to join the pastoral ideal; in reality, however, working for wages has left them without the energy or the resources to participate in the ideal. The rocking chair on the porch is a symbol of “middle-classlessness”; in it, a person can move and feel active without actually doing or accomplishing anything. Finally, Seguin explores how windows in *Sister Carrie* allow one to see into another world, either public or private, without truly entering it. Through those windows people can see others working, the products available for consumption, and the ways others might live. Windows open up the world of imagination, of possibility, of what might be. Yet, as Seguin notes, the world of possibility can exist only so long: “it is inherently unstable: one must eventually take the plunge and buy something, whence it vanishes and one is left with a commodity that is inevitably something less than one thought it would be (indeed, one knew it would be all along, which is partly why the anticipation of the purchase can be so pleasurable)” (40). Seguin uses this line of thought to explain why Hurstwood is doomed to failure, since any sort of action he takes results in the exploding of the betweenness.

In *A Lost Lady* and *The Professor’s House*, Cather also demonstrates the role of American middle-classlessness. Seguin discusses how, in *The Professor’s House*, Roddy (a day laborer) respects Tom, who hired him to excavate artifacts, “less for the content of education than for the cultural capital it grants, and for the social mobility—a rise from the working class into the ‘work free’ realm of the middle class—[which] this cultural capital was said to make available, at least according to the ideologies of education and its social role that were becoming predominant during this period” (71). Seguin sees Cather as looking back to a “feudal” model to define connections between people: “feudal relations point ‘beyond class’ because of the bonds

of natural sympathy they foster, whereas class under capitalism, despite the manifest antagonism, represents a universalizing political dynamic that promises the eventual end of all hierarchical social relations" (73). Seguin links Cather's feudal model of human relations to aesthetic production and the capitalist system. She wanted people to read her books, of course, but not to the point where they became simple commodities. She resisted having her works on school lists, and she only reluctantly consented to having *Shadows on the Rock* be a Book-of-the-Month club selection, part of a distinctly middlebrow culture. Seguin describes this dilemma: "The promoters of middlebrow culture generally attempted to combine a commitment to high culture with a desire—often based on laudably democratic impulses—to make art and literature available to a wider audience. This is somewhat at odds with the logic of Cather's project, since, at the end of the day, what she fantasizes as the 'aesthetic' of the true value of the work is precisely what is not widely circulatable" (79). Ultimately, according to Seguin, Cather places these middlebrow people in the professional/managerial class, in between, neither desired nor undesired.

It is from West's *The Day of the Locust* that Seguin draws his title: "The unassuming phrase 'around quitting time' seems in the context of the novel as a whole to be a peculiarly resonant and symptomatic one" (83). In this novel about the production of culture, centered in the film industry of California, Hollywood functions as a "space of promise, a vague but compelling promise of some singular fulfillment or realization" which "is bound up with a properly utopian impulse that, because it cannot be realized here and now, must of necessity be subject to betrayal when it crosses over to desiring and a regime of objects and their partial fulfillments" (92). West likens the retirees to California to the industry, insofar as they work only to reach a point to cease work, yet the imagined goal of leisure is never really reached. California's great social mobility, coupled with the cultural production of films in the 1930s, provides another example of middle-classlessness—like the rocking chair, a film is literally a "movie," providing motion while "encod[ing] stasis at its very heart" (107). Furthermore, in his chapter on fiction in the 1950s, Seguin discusses both Barth's *The Floating Opera* and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Seguin sees these works at least in part as connected to the new middle class medium of the era—television. With its instant consumability and its constant motion, television provides American society with yet another "motion without progress" invention. In Barth's novel, the character of Todd (which, Seguin notes, means "death" in German) lives an empty, unchanging life in a serial culture represented by the vaudeville show on the river boat. More optimistically, in Hemingway's

The Old Man and the Sea we get a look at that liminal quitting time, “if only for a moment, when Santiago accepts his defeat and relaxes at last in his boat, a slave to the domination of lived time no longer” (151–52).

Overall, readers will find Seguin’s ideas useful, and in some ways enlightening, even though his prose is occasionally dense and convoluted. His study draws on a variety of theorists, such as Marx, Adorno, Benjamin, Jameson, and Seldes. Seguin puts his ideas forth most clearly in his postscript, when he says that “Work, as one of the paradigmatic forms or images of creative agency in bourgeois society, but debased under capitalist rationalization, lies within the political unconscious of these texts as something to be at once disavowed and embraced, affirmed and negated, and tortuously negotiated throughout” (159). Only by keeping the role of class in our own foreground, he suggests, do we know when the authors are trying to make us look the other way.

—Lydia A. Schultz, Talmud Torah of St. Paul

News & Notes

Two volumes in the Dreiser Edition are in production and will be out within the year: *A Traveler at Forty*, edited by Renate von Bardeleben, and *Theodore Dreiser: Interviews*, edited by Donald Pizer and Frederic E. Rusch. Yoshinobu Hakutani's *Theodore Dreiser's Uncollected Magazine Articles, 1897–1902*, will be published this fall by the University of Delaware Press

The New York Metropolitan Opera will stage *An American Tragedy* during the 2004/05 season, Tobias Picker composer.

The following report, on the occasion of Theodore Dreiser being inducted into the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame at DePauw University on 12 April 2003, will be of interest to Dreiserians who are curious about how Dreiser is perceived today in his home town. (Originally published 13 April 2003, Terre Haute *Tribune-Star*.)

Theodore Dreiser Honored as Journalist

By Melissa Vogt, Terre Haute *Tribune-Star*

Indiana hasn't always welcomed Hoosier native Theodore Dreiser with open arms.

But this weekend, the state inducted her son into the Journalism Hall of Fame at Greencastle. The honor was bestowed more than 110 years after Dreiser wrote his first story for the *Chicago Globe*.

"In Indiana, we have a famous novelist and he's never been included in the Journalism Hall of Fame," said Fred Woodress. The retired Ball State University journalism professor worked for years to secure the votes for Dreiser's induction. "I just thought he needed to be in there."

Dreiser is better known for his novels—which editors and censors considered often too explicit for 20th-century sensitivities—than his three years as a newspaper reporter, or later work editing magazines. Scholars say, however, that Dreiser's journalism days laid the groundwork for his later literary pursuits.

The great American naturalist writer had humble beginnings in Terre Haute. He was born on South Ninth Street in 1871 after his German-American family had hit hard times.

Just two years earlier, a fire had destroyed his father's wool mill at Sullivan. Before then, John Paul and Sarah Dreiser had been moderately successful and could support the large family. Theodore was the ninth of 10 surviving children.

Dreiser's autobiography of his first 20 years, *Dawn*, recalls the family's struggles to survive. The family moved five times before Dreiser turned 16, as his father sought work.

Those who study Dreiser's life and work say he spent the rest of his life trying to escape the poverty he associated with his years in Indiana, and by extension, the state itself.

"Indiana really was never happy with Dreiser's work," said Fred Rusch, Indiana State University English professor emeritus. "Historians of Indiana literature frequently left him out."

Rusch has spent the past year collecting interviews Dreiser gave to newspapers during his lifetime.

Fellow ISU English professor emeritus Richard Dowell says Dreiser's ambivalent attitude toward his hometown was heightened by his elder brother's obvious affection for Terre Haute.

Dowell, a Spencer native, taught English at ISU from 1963 to 1993, and edited *The Dreiser Newsletter* for 20 years. Today, the academic publication is *Dreiser Studies*, published twice a year by the International Dreiser Society.

Indiana revered Paul Dresser, Theodore's brother, who had changed his last name for show business. A town west of Terre Haute was named after him, and the state adopted "On the Banks of the Wabash River, Far Away" as its official song. "In contrast, [Dreiser] didn't share his celebrity with Terre Haute," Dowell said. "He left at age 8 and never really came back."

Dreiser stayed overnight in Terre Haute in 1915 while researching *A Hoosier Holiday*, but didn't trumpet his presence.

Neither was Terre Haute infatuated with Dreiser, a local historian says. Dreiser leaned ever further to the left, to the point of joining the Communist Party before his death in 1945. Indiana tended to be conservative.

"We pretty much disowned him," said Vigo County historian Mike McCormick. "Slowly, but surely, he's been resurrected."

In 1971, ISU celebrated the 100th anniversary of Dreiser's birth. Dowell said the Terre Haute community gave the event a "good reception."

But even today, "You don't see a lot of enthusiasm [for Dreiser]."

McCormick agreed. "I do think he's certainly underrated in the eyes of the local populace."

Dreiser also angered local men and women by meddling with plans for a Dresser memorial in Terre Haute, said Clayton Henderson, music professor at St. Mary's College in Notre Dame. His book, *On the Banks of the Wabash: The Life and Music of Paul Dresser*, is expected to be published this summer.

In the 1920s, a committee planned to create a 9-mile circular Paul Dresser Drive, along with statues. Dresser died in 1906.

According to Henderson, Dreiser reportedly told the group, "That's not what my brother would've liked. It'd be better to bring his body back" to be buried in Terre Haute.

Henderson said the project languished because the committee got fed up with Dreiser's interference.

"Dreiser could be hateful," the music professor said. "He showed that side far too often to people."

Some of Dreiser's contemporaries simply attributed his moods to artist's temperament, according to biographies.

Rush says Dreiser had a complex personality. "He had great sympathy for human nature and at the same time felt like he was being manipulated by the universe, out of his control."

Among the volumes written about Dreiser, few are devoted to dissecting his early journalism career, which began in June 1892 at the *Chicago Globe* and ended three years later, when he stormed out of Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*.

University of Iowa English professor Ted Nostwich has spent considerable time tracking down all of Dreiser's news stories. None ever appeared with Dreiser's byline, since in those days, only the most renowned reporters were accorded such a distinction.

Nostwich says Dreiser was intent on expressing himself and becoming rich and famous when he embarked on his career.

As a preface to Charles Shapiro's 1962 *Theodore Dreiser: Our Bitter Patriot*, Harry T. Moore described how Dreiser quickly became disillusioned with newspapers.

"In Chicago, St. Louis, Toledo, Pittsburgh and New York, Dreiser found evils that the very newspapers he was working for wanted to keep covered up. He soon found that he could hastily fake a harmless 'human-interest' story, which is what his editors wanted, and could spend the valuable hours of the day in the public library."

Literary scholars generally focus on Dreiser's newspaper days as they relate to his later creative work.

English professor Rusch speculated Dreiser wouldn't have become a writer without the experience. "As a reporter, Dreiser discovered he liked writing and was good at it," Rusch said. "Dreiser's enduring legacy lies in his ability to really capture the feelings and aspirations of the common person," he said.

Dowell believes it is unlikely Dreiser would have been selected for the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame solely on the merit of his newspaper and magazine work. His first encounter with Dreiser was reading *Sister Carrie* in a college class about Midwest writers.

Two of Dreiser's best-known novels—*An American Tragedy* and *Sister Carrie*—were listed by Modern Library among the top 100 English-language novels of the 20th century.

Dreiser was often frustrated as his manuscripts were hacked by editors and censors.

Modern readers wouldn't be too shocked, Dowell said. "By today's standards, what Dreiser wrote seems terribly, terribly tame."

Whether a reader loves or reviles Dreiser, one thing is true, Dowell said.

"As long as we teach American literature, Dreiser will be a figure continued to be talked about."

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With this issue *Dreiser Studies* shifts to a Summer/Winter publication schedule. Also with this issue, Miriam Gogol, co-founder of the International Theodore Dreiser Society, steps down from the editorial board of *Dreiser Studies*, and Shawn St. Jean leaves as Book Review Editor. The editors offer them sincere thanks for many years of fine service. Beginning with the next issue, Renate von Bardeleben will join the editorial board. Books for review may henceforth be sent to the editors.

Contributors

Jude Davies is a senior lecturer in the School of Cultural Studies at King Alfred's College, Winchester, U.K. He completed his Ph.D. on Dreiser and Herbert Spencer in 1993, and edits the chapters on Dreiser, Realism, and Naturalism in the on-line *Literary Encyclopedia* <<http://www.litencyc.com>>. He has also published widely on cultural representations of identity, including most recently *Diana, A Cultural History: Gender, Race, Nation and the People's Princess* (2001).

Nancy McIlvaine Donovan received her Ph.D. from Miami University of Ohio. In 2000 she received the first Dreiser Essay Prize, an annual award sponsored by the Dreiser Society, for her essay "Representing Grace Brown: The Working Class-Woman in 'American Tragedy' Narratives," which appeared in *Dreiser Studies* 31.2 (2000).

Kevin W. Jett is completing his Ph.D. at the University of Toledo, Ohio, where he is an instructor of freshmen writing and introduction to literature classes. His particular interests are the treatment in American Literature of the businessman, consumerism, and corporate liberalism. His work has appeared in *Lamar Journal of the Humanities*, *Dreiser Studies*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, and *MidAmerica*.

Mandy See received an M.A. in English from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2002. She is a contributor to the forthcoming *A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia* and lives in Virginia, where she is a freelance editor.

Lydia A. Schultz is currently the Librarian at the Talmud Torah of St. Paul in Minnesota. She has recently served as the guest editor for a special issue of *College Literature* on working class literature (Fall 2002), which also included her essay on Louisa May Alcott.

Roger W. Smith is an independent scholar and freelance editor with an interest in early twentieth century American literary history. He was formerly employed in the publishing industry and as a technical writer for a benefits consulting firm. He is a contributor to the forthcoming *A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia* and is currently pursuing several research topics related to Dreiser.